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WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG







WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG







*This beautiful old building has looked down upon changing North Salem days for over a hundred and fifty years. Its land was purchased from the Indians by the Dutchman, Stephanus Van Cortlandt. Built for his Manor House by Stephen DeLancey, during the American Revolution it was taken over by our patriots for Tory trials and imprisonment. Revolutionary troops camped on its grounds. Later, it became the North Salem Academy, one of the foremost educational institutions in the young United States. It is now our Town Hall in Salem Center.*

# *When Our Town Was Young*

STORIES OF NORTH SALEM'S YESTERDAY

COLLECTED AND WRITTEN BY  
BOYS AND GIRLS OF TODAY

---

*Edited by*

FRANCES EICHNER *and*  
HELEN FERRIS TIBBETS

PHOTOGRAPHS OF NORTH SALEM

HISTORIC LANDMARKS

By FRED C. WARNER

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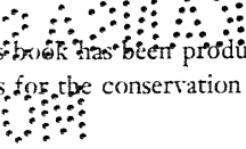
*Sponsored by*

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

*Central Rural School System, District Number One*

TOWN OF NORTH SALEM, NEW YORK

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*Designed by ALICE H. PALMER*

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
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FIRST EDITION



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*The Seventh Grade, 1942-43, Central High School authors of our first Historical Booklet, with their teacher, Miss Frances Eichner, and principal, Mr. Fred C. Warner*

## *How This Book Happened*

THIS IS REALLY a neighborhood book. We who have been members of the Seventh Grades of the Central High School of the Town of North Salem, New York, during the past three years, could not have collected these stories of our Town's past without the help of our older friends who have so generously shared their family records and recollections.

## HOW THIS BOOK HAPPENED

Our work on this book began when our principal, Mr. Fred C. Warner, and our teacher, Miss Frances Eichner, told us in our Social Studies course during the school year 1942-43 that we were to find out everything we could about North Salem's early days.

First we looked in all the history books we could find, to see what they said about our Town. We found some things in these reference books, for North Salem has had its own important part in the development of our country. But actually, we are only a small Town, in a large County, in a large State in the United States. It is understandable, therefore, why we could not find a great deal in books about just how the people of North Salem lived when they first settled our Town, and all the other things we wished to know.

So we started asking questions of our older neighbors whose ancestors came here in the early days. And we became quite excited about the stories they told us. We wrote these stories down, and we had special programs at school when we passed them along to our schoolmates. One day our neighbor, Mrs. Albert B. Tibbets, who is an editor of books for boys and girls, visited our school and heard us tell some of the stories we had collected. Then she suggested that we plan to publish our stories in a booklet at the end of the school year.

We worked harder than ever then. And when Mr.

## HOW THIS BOOK HAPPENED

Warner took us on historical field trips, he made pictures of the landmarks that we visited. By the time the second term had arrived, Mrs. Tibbets said we had enough stories for a printed booklet. So it was published under the same title as that of this book: *When Our Town Was Young*.

The co-operation of our printer and engraver was very important to us in connection with the cost of printing this booklet. Both helped us by doing our work at a special price, which made it possible for us to send in our order for five hundred copies. The enthusiasm with which our North Salem friends welcomed our printed booklet made us very happy. And our five hundred copies sold so rapidly that soon we ordered three hundred more. These, too, were in demand, giving us a total sale that enabled us to pay our expenses and to present our school library with the profit—eighty dollars.

We were also very much pleased over the many fine letters that came to us from such people as Dr. George D. Stoddard, Commissioner of Education for New York State, and Mr. Angelo Patri, the famous educator. We have kept all of them in a special scrapbook and we have quoted from as many as possible on the back of this book's jacket. This scrapbook and our booklet have since been used in the course on Curriculum Adjustment in the Modern High School at New York University.

## HOW THIS BOOK HAPPENED

Newspapers in various places wrote about our booklet, including the New York *Times* and the New York *Herald Tribune*. Articles about it were published in the *Clearing House*, the magazine published by the Department of Education of New York University, and in *Child Life Magazine*. In the latter, the article was called "The Town That Wrote a Book." The magazine of the New York State Historical Society, the *Yorke*, also reprinted stories from our booklet.

Some very interesting things happened as a result of the publishing of our booklet, for after word about it had been printed in the newspapers, we got letters from teachers and school principals in various parts of the country, sending us money for copies. Then they wrote us about what they were doing along the same line.

But of all the things that happened in connection with our booklet, what pleased us most was the decision of our North Salem War Council to put it into all the Christmas packages that were sent to our North Salem young men in the Armed Forces. The letters that they wrote about their pleasure in having it have meant a great deal to us and we put them, too, in our scrapbook.

When these letters came, we were happier than ever that we had published our North Salem stories in a booklet. But even so, to those of us who were in the 1942-43 Seventh Grade, the booklet was only the start.

## HOW THIS BOOK HAPPENED



*Members of the Seventh Grade, 1943-44, Central High School, in Indian costume as part of their Social Studies Indian project*

First of all, to us it was simply a collection of interesting stories, not a complete history of North Salem. For we realized that a complete history would need a big book, and also that it would take a long time to write.

In the booklet, therefore, we included an invitation to our North Salem neighbors, telling them that next year's Seventh Grade—1943-44—planned to go on with the project and would be grateful to receive more stories.

No sooner said than done! As soon as we of the Seventh Grade of 1943-44 began our work in the autumn of 1943, more stories began to come in. Then we of this Seventh Grade decided to have a booklet, too. This one was multigraphed and we issued only enough

## HOW THIS BOOK HAPPENED

for our class members and a few of our older friends, for by then everyone in Town had begun to hope that someday we could publish our North Salem stories in a bound book. We of the 1943-44 Seventh Grade took as our special project an Indian one, which is why our picture here is shown in Indian costume. Our work on this project included trips to the Museum of Natural History and the Museum of the American Indian in New York City.

Then came the biggest excitement of all. When we of the Seventh Grade of 1944-45 started to work on this historical plan—our picture was taken in the Dutch costumes we had for our Dutch project—and when we collected still more stories and facts about our Town's early days, our Board of Education decided that publishing all of it in a bound book would be an excellent thing to do.

This is that bound book, made possible for us by our older North Salem friends and especially by our Board of Education of Central Rural School District No. 1, Town of North Salem, New York.

Just as with our two historical booklets, this book is a collection of stories rather than a complete history of North Salem. We hope that such a history may be written someday, and that it may include the many fascinating family records that are available.

## HOW THIS BOOK HAPPENED



*The Seventh Grade of 1944-45, Central High School, taken in Dutch costume as part of their Social Studies Dutch project*

We have tried very hard to be accurate about all dates and facts that are part of our Town's history. In our checking, we used various historical reference books, especially: *The History of the County of Westchester*, by Robert Bolton, Jr.; *The History of Westchester County, N. Y.*, Alvah P. French, Editor in Chief; and *History of Westchester County, N. Y.*, by J. Thomas Scharf. We also obtained valuable material about North Salem from the bulletins of the Westchester Historical Society. In our Indian project, we also consulted a variety of books, especially: *The Indian How Book*, by Arthur

## HOW THIS BOOK HAPPENED

C. Parker, and *Indian Tribes of Hudson's River*, by E. M. Ruttenber. Facts about our early farmers we found in *A History of Agriculture in the State of New York*, by Ulysses Prentiss Hendrick. Some of the illustrations in this last volume were copied for our book.

Collecting and writing down the stories printed here has been one of the most interesting things any of us has ever done. And we hope that other boys and girls in other Towns will through our book become interested in doing the same thing.

"Our United States is the nation we love because the men and women who first lived here made it the land of the free. Getting acquainted with our own pioneers is a thrilling thing to do." This is the way the article ended which was published about our first historical booklet of 1943 in *Child Life Magazine*. We are quoting it here because it gives you the chief reason why we should like to have many other boys and girls carry out a plan like ours, wherever you may live.

*January, 1945*



## HOW THIS BOOK HAPPENED

### SEVENTH GRADE, 1942-43

Marie Arata	Arthur Folchetti	Lora Maxcy
Roger J. Browne	Barbara Fowler	Roger Mayes
Virginia Butler	Yolanda Gerardi	Everett Moore
Erma Caulfield	Louise Giles	Harriett O'Brien
Bruce Conners	Kathleen Goudey	Robert Ritchie
Eugene Daley	Anna Hall	Margaret Tonery
Donald Dessereau	Walter Heady	Nancy Vail
Betty Doyle	Charles Krueger	Stuart Valden
Robert Flood	James Lundy	Evelyn Van Orden
	Robert White	

### SEVENTH GRADE, 1943-44

Mary Adee	Wesley Lobdell	Charles Schafer
Helen Alexander	Linwood Maxcy	Jane Scharf
Celia Daley	Jean Menichelli	Betty Shay
Angelina Giordani	Paul O'Dell	Francis Wathley
Lois Johnson	Doris O'Donnell	Marion Webb
Gloria Kenney	Jacqueline Oothouse	Carol Ann Weeks
Robert Leyden	Harry Rice	Julia White

### SEVENTH GRADE, 1944-45

Hazel Adams	Ida Bocchino	Everett Joray
Faye Anderson	Dolores Dworak	Michael Larkin
Ruth Baker	Gary Field	Jane Morey
Barbara Ballard	Peggy Hoffman	Betty Outhouse
Richard Blumlein	Joan Johnson	Allen Schafer
Norma Totten		Reinhart Ulrich

## *In Appreciation*

**B**ECAUSE SO MANY of our North Salem neighbors helped us, and people who lived in other places, too, we boys and girls feel that they, as well as we, are the authors of this book. We are very grateful to all of them for their share in *When Our Town Was Young*. We extend our special thanks:

*To our Board of Education* for their interest, and encouragement and for their sponsorship of this book.

*To Mr. Fred C. Warner*, Supervising Principal of our North Salem schools since 1911, who has been of unfailing help in collecting the material in this book and whose beautiful photographs of North Salem's historic landmarks are an invaluable part of the permanent record of our Town's own history.

*To our North Salem neighbors* who have given us much valuable data: Mr. Allison Albee; Mrs. Fannie Close Andrews; Mr. Enoch Avery; Mr. William Bailey; Mr. Thomas

## IN APPRECIATION

M. Butler; Mr. Stewart B. Butler; Mr. George Cable; Mr. A. Ward Chamberlain; Mr. Charles J. F. Decker; Miss Julia T. Emerson; Mr. Ferd T. Hopkins; Mrs. Phoebe C. Hoyt; Miss Magdalene Juengst; Mr. Floyd Y. Keeler; Mr. Robert D. Knapp; Mr. Dennis Malanchuk; Mrs. Walter E. Miller; Mrs. Frederick T. Nelson; Mrs. Carrie Paddock; Mr. Elbert C. Purdy; Mr. Frederick A. Purdy; Mrs. Anne Beeson Purdy; Mrs. Isaac Hart Purdy; Mrs. Matthew F. Ratchford; Miss Mary Rich; Mrs. William Ryder; Dr. Ernest N. Ryder; Mr. Ernest G. Secord; Mr. Benjamin Smith; Mr. Benjamin Van Scy; Mrs. Charles W. Wallace.

*To the historical scholars* who furnished us with needed information: Mr. Allison Albee, writer and historian, Rye, N. Y.; Mr. E. K. Burnett, Museum of the American Indian, New York City; Miss Mary E. Cunningham, Supervisor of School Services, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, N. Y.; Mr. William T. Gaynor, New York Central Railroad; Mr. D. Irving Mead, President, Westchester County Historical Society; Dr. Arthur C. Parker, Bausch Museum, Rochester, N. Y.; Mrs. Mildred E. Struble, Assistant Librarian, Westchester County Historical Society; Miss Carolyn F. Ulrich, Director of the Periodicals Division, New York City Public Library.

*To the designers and makers of this book:* Mr. A. P. Tedesco of Doubleday, Doran and Company; Miss Alice H. Palmer of the Junior Literary Guild; Mr. Julien Soubiran of the Horan Engraving Company; the staff of the Country Life Press.

*To our commercial teacher,* Miss Adelaide L. Hurlbut, for personally typing all of the manuscript for this book.

*To our editors:* Miss Frances Eichner and Mrs. Helen Ferris Tibbets.



*North Salem is a Town in northeastern Westchester County, New York State. Its area is about twenty-four square miles; its population 1192. We have four villages—North Salem, Salem Center, Purdys and Croton Falls, each with its churches, business center and post office, all connected by improved roads. The Harlem Division of the New York Central Railroad passes through Purdys and Croton Falls. We have a Central High School, two elementary schools and a Town library. Our Titicus and Croton Reservoirs furnish New York City with drinking water. Dairying and fruit growing are our chief occupations. People admire the natural beauty of our Town with its lakes, rushing streams, wooded hills, fertile valleys, and lovely views, as that of the Titicus Reservoir.*

*When Our Town Was Young*





## CHAPTER ONE

### *The Founding of North Salem*

IN THE LATTER PART of the seventeenth century, a rich Dutch merchant named Stephanus Van Cortlandt decided to buy a tract of land in that part of New York State where our Town of North Salem is now situated. After receiving permission from King William III of England to make this purchase, Van Cortlandt bargained with the Indians who lived in this territory for the land which he wished to have for his Manor.

These Indians were the local tribe, who claimed as theirs the territory as far as Long Island Sound in one direction and the Hudson River in the other. In 1683, through their appointed representatives, they agreed to sell to Stephanus Van Cortlandt a portion of the land which he wished to own. Van Cortlandt paid them in

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

knives, blankets, guns, trinkets, and other articles that the Indians valued. Later, in 1697, he was able to purchase from them the remaining part of the land that he desired. Thus he gained control of what became known as the Van Cortlandt Manor—all the land bordered by the Kitchawan River, now the Croton, and its branches.

He built a stone trading house at Croton Point, which is Croton-on-Hudson today, but he did not live long to enjoy his Manor or to manage it. For he died on November 25, 1700. In his will, he divided his Manor among his eleven children, who later sold much of it. Early owners of land in North Salem from this original Manor were Andrew Teller, Colonel John Schuyler, and Stephen DeLancey, who married Anne Van Cortlandt, daughter of Stephanus Van Cortlandt. It was their grandson, also named Stephen DeLancey, who built for a residence the building that later became the famous North Salem Academy and is now our Town Hall. The small settlement near by, which was in what is now the easterly end of our Town, was known as "DeLancey Town."

With many Dutch people arriving in Nieuw Amsterdam, to the south, it was natural that, in addition to the Van Cortlandts, some of them who were farmers should find their way to our Town to establish their homes in the New World. And although North Salem was never a large center of Dutch colonial life, as was the Island

## THE FOUNDING OF NORTH SALEM



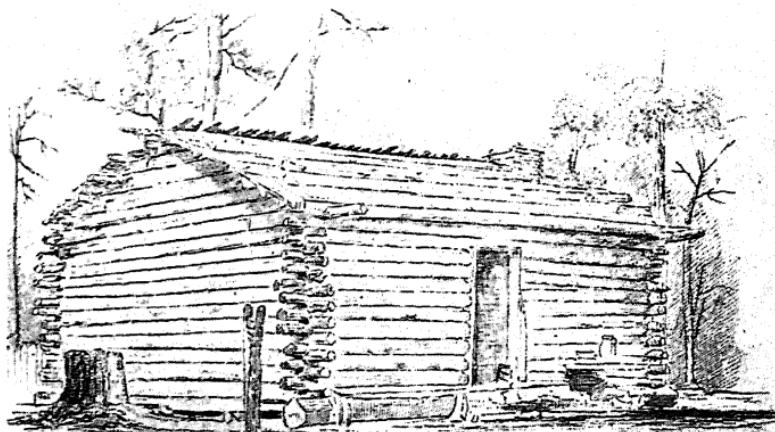
*Scenic beauty and water power in our North Salem streams welcomed our first settlers, as here where they built a saw and grist mill on the Titicus River*

of Manhattan or the Hudson River, along whose banks Dutch settlements were found in numbers, the Dutch who were among our first settlers have nevertheless given us many valuable things. Their sturdy honesty, their thrift, their self-reliance, their industry are part of our North Salem heritage.

Early records of our locality include mention of such families as the Steenrods, Van Scoys, Van Tassels, Van Warts—all fine old Dutch names. They and others of Dutch ancestry came with or followed the Van Cortlandts and then acquired land.

With the Dutch, Scotch and English pioneers also began arriving in North Salem and, as time went on, they became more numerous than the Dutch. We are

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG



*The first homes in North Salem were log cabins, such as this*

fortunate that today there live in North Salem direct descendants of one of the twenty-two men who obtained from the Governor of New York State a certain Quit-Claim Deed which established the first division of colonial land that later became what is now the easterly part of our Town of North Salem. The home of these descendants is the Keeler homestead in the present village of North Salem; one of them still owns four hundred acres of the original property.

Back of this homestead rises a hill generally called Titicus Mountain, about a thousand feet in height. This is the highest point in Westchester County, and from it a beautiful panorama unfolds. Without the aid of field glasses, one can see most of the old Manor of Van Cort-

## THE FOUNDING OF NORTH SALEM

landt, fading in the blue distance to the other side of the Hudson River at Peekskill. Our pioneers used to call the highest of the hills that can be seen toward the Hudson the "Bread Tray," because it looks like one of the old-time, shallow wooden bread or kneading bowls, turned upside down.

The Keeler family also have in their possession valuable documents concerning our Town's early history. Because of this, and because their knowledge of those early days is so complete, we asked one of them, Mr. Floyd Y. Keeler, a member of our Board of Education, to write for our book the account that follows.

"Unless the name of a Town or Township had some special historical significance, because of some event recorded by history, or subsequently became famous as the birthplace of a distinguished figure in history, it is often difficult to fix the exact date of its founding.

"The founding of the Town of North Salem can be exactly determined due to the existence of an old Quit-Claim Deed, dated March 10, 1731, and signed by twenty-two men who were thus empowered to make a division of a certain 50,000 acres. The full text of this historic document, so vital to our Town's history, appears in its entirety on pages 154-58.

"The fifty thousand acres referred to above must have comprised the larger part of the acreage contained within

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

the tract of land known as 'ye Oblong.' This land included most of what is now the easterly parts of North and South Salem and extended as far north as the Putnam County line, as far south as the Town of Poundridge, and as far east as the Connecticut State line. It is noted in French's *History of Westchester County* that the acreage contained within the Oblong was slightly in excess of 61,000 acres.

"Old maps seem to prove that the acreage granted to the twenty-two men and their heirs and assigns constituted what was known as Salem Town. It was later referred to as Upper Salem and Lower Salem. Upper Salem was approximately what is now the eastern end of the Township of North Salem, and Lower Salem comprised what is now the eastern end of the Township of Lewisboro, including what is now South Salem. It must have been a relatively narrow strip of land running a distance of approximately twelve miles north and south and three miles east and west.

"Travel in early colonial times was easiest by water, hence the settlement of northern Westchester County came from the east, through Norwalk, Connecticut, on Long Island Sound, and was settled from the west from Peekskill and Fishkill on the east bank of the Hudson River. Another controlling reason why the easterly boundary of the original Salem Town stopped where it

## THE FOUNDING OF NORTH SALEM

did is due to the fact that the boundary line of the lands of the Manor of Van Cortlandt cut through Upper Salem, now North Salem, just east of the old Wallace house, now occupied by Mr. Eugene P. Struhsacker. This boundary line ran roughly from northeast to southwest, and therefore ran just west of the old Benedict house, now occupied by Mrs. Mary K. Kennard.

"It was not until some time after the Revolutionary War that the dismemberment of Van Cortlandt Manor took place and the Townships of North Salem and Lewisboro were created and their northern and southern boundaries extended west to the Croton River, and the present names of the two Townships established.

"Probably the oldest structure in the Town is our Town Hall, located in what is now Salem Center, the same building that was originally the DeLancey Manor House. Most of the DeLanceys and Van Cortlandts were Loyalists, keeping their allegiance to the British King. Therefore their property was confiscated by the Colonial Government, at the time of the Revolution.

"Inasmuch as the old DeLancey Manor House was approximately twenty-five miles from Norwalk, Connecticut, and an equal distance from Peekskill on the Hudson River, it was a convenient halfway stopping place for travelers or troops on the march. There is evidence that would seem to justify the statement that the

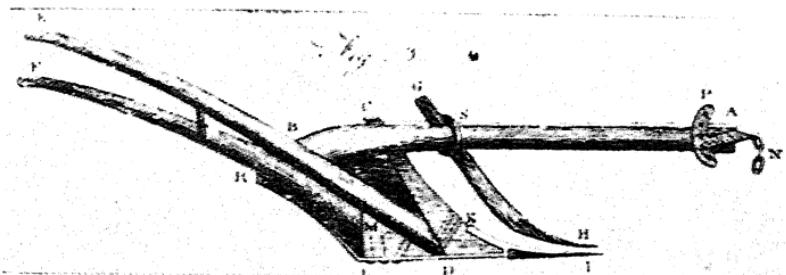
## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

What was known as "DeLancey Town" undoubtedly included Salem Center. Salem Center was a natural place for a settlement because of the near-by water power, where mills could be built. Also, when North Salem Academy was started after the Revolution, additional people had reason for making their homes there. Mrs. Frederick T. Nelson tells us that some people then living around the Academy called their settlement the "Corporation."

The settlement and naming of the villages of Purdys and Croton Falls came considerably later than the settlement of the villages of North Salem and Salem Center, and their growth into our present villages was largely due to the building of the Harlem Division of the New York Central Railroad, whose northern terminus for a number of years was Croton Falls. The story of the coming of the railroad and the naming of Purdys is told in a later chapter, "North Salem's Post Roads and Railroads."

A *Red Book* of the State of New York, dated 1835, indicates "Owenville," Westchester County, as a post office with James Owen as postmaster. Owenville was the settlement that was renamed Croton Falls about the time the railroad was built. Mr. Owen was the owner of several mills in the vicinity of what is now Croton Falls.

## THE FOUNDING OF NORTH SALEM



*Wooden plows such as this were used by our first North Salem farmers in their fields*

"Ye Oblong or equivalent lands" mentioned in the old Quit-Claim Deed was the cause of a long dispute between what became the young States of New York and Connecticut. This dispute came about as follows. In 1664, the English had captured New Netherland from the Dutch, and had named it New York in honor of the Duke of York. Also, settlements had been made along Long Island Sound such as Stamford, Greenwich, and others. These settlements were later united into the State of Connecticut. And both States claimed the territory now included in our Town.

At first, attempts were made to establish a boundary between New York and Connecticut twenty miles east of the Hudson River. But the people of the two States would not agree to this.

In 1731, New York State agreed to give Connecticut a section of land along Long Island Sound twelve miles

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

long and eight miles wide. This accounts for the zigzag eastern boundary of Westchester County. In return, Connecticut gave New York a narrow rectangular strip of land between the two States. This rectangular strip was one mile and three quarters and twenty rods wide for most of its length. It was about fifty miles long, ending at the Massachusetts border. It was this strip which contained the 61,440 acres mentioned previously.

Still the trouble went on. People living in the disputed territory often refused to vote because they declared they did not know whether they were residents of New York or Connecticut. They said they preferred not voting at all to voting illegally. Others used this confusion as an excuse not to pay their taxes.

The final government settlement of the quarrel was not made until the nineteenth century, although surveys had been made many years before. This final settlement was ratified by the legislatures of both States and confirmed by Congress during the session of 1880-81. The land given to Connecticut was called the Rectangle. The land given to New York was called the Oblong, and our Town of North Salem was in the Oblong.

On the Dingle Ridge Road, a short distance south of the residence of Dr. and Mrs. Matthew F. Ratchford, stands an old house which was built by Samuel Field. This spot was the birthplace of Jane Field, who was said

## THE FOUNDING OF NORTH SALEM

to be the first white child born on the Oblong section of land. The date of her birth was 1732. Jane married Samuel Coe and then lived in the main house of what is now the Pietsch property. Jane Coe's daughter, Mary, married a Mr. Ryder who was an ancestor of Mr. William Ryder.

Among the old families who acquired their land here at the time of the Oblong transaction in 1731 or shortly after were the Baxters, Benedicts, Closes, Delavans, Finches, Halsteads, Hawleys, Lobdells, Palmers, Sherwoods, Smiths, Townsends, Vails, and Wallaces.



## CHAPTER TWO

### *Among Our North Salem Pioneers*

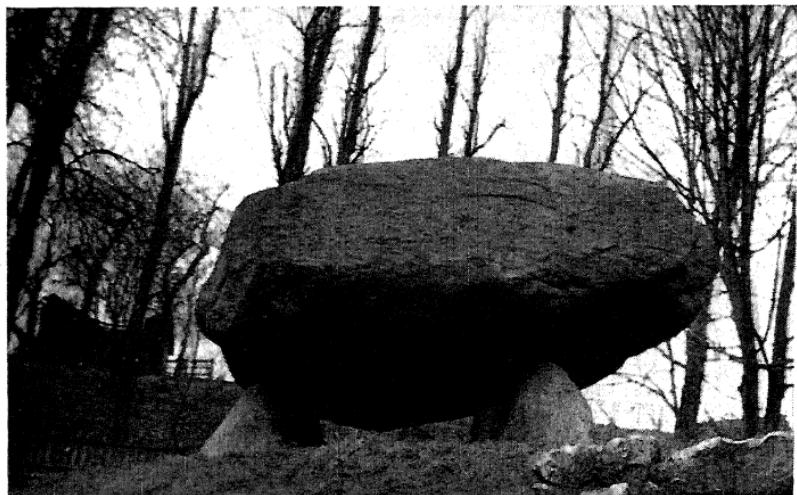
AS WE LEARNED about the founding of our Town, we discovered many interesting things about our early pioneers, which we collected for this chapter. We feel certain that from the first our Great Boulder attracted a great deal of attention, for all old histories of our part of the country mention it as one of New York State's unique natural curiosities. And in Bolton's *History of the County of Westchester*, there is an old-fashioned drawing of it.

The Great Boulder is in the village of North Salem on the property of Mrs. Stebbins B. Quick. It is composed of granite and was undoubtedly brought down to our locality during the glacial period, since no other traces of granite of this composition are found in this region. Granite similar to it is found in New Hampshire

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and Canada. The Boulder, which is estimated to weigh about sixty tons, rests on five smaller stones of limestone and stands about four feet from the surface of the hill on which it is situated. Some people say that for a long time, many centuries ago, the Great Boulder lay buried in the ground. Eventually, the frost, the snow, the heat of the sun, and the rain wore the soil away into the near-by stream and the rock was revealed as it is today.

In connection with our Dutch project in school, we were interested in finding out, if we could, where some of our Dutch North Salem settlers first landed in America and when. This we were able to do because



*The Great Boulder, known as one of the most interesting natural curiosities of New York State, was here when our first North Salem settlers came*

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of the fact that Mr. Benjamin Van Scoy, our Town Superintendent of Roads, is a direct descendant of one of these North Salem Dutch pioneers.

Mr. Van Scoy's sister, Mrs. Phoebe C. Hoyt, wrote to us, "*Hedge's History* records that, with the first settlers who came from Holland to New Netherlands, now New York, were three brothers: Abraham, Peter, and Isaac Van Schaick, the first settling in Albany, the second on the Hudson, and Isaac near Oyster Bay.

"Cornelis Van Schaick, a son of Isaac, removed from East Hampton to North Salem, Westchester County, in 1737. One of the sons of Cornelis was Abraham Van Scoy, Sr., who had nine children, and his son, Abraham, Jr., was the father of eleven children. The Van Scloys in North Salem and vicinity are descended from the two Abrahams. Their homestead was in that part of the Town known as Bogtown. It is said that Cornelis changed the name Van Schaick to Van Scoy, so perhaps he changed Cornelis to Cornelius.

"Abraham Van Scoy, Sr., served in the Westchester County Militia under Colonel Thaddeus Crane in the Revolution. His son, Abraham Van Scoy, Jr., served in the same regiment with his father. When the Town of North Salem was organized as such, Abraham Van Scoy was elected Overseer of the Poor."

We also learned why so many of the old houses still

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standing in our Town have Dutch ovens. To the Dutch settlers, the kitchen was the most lived-in room in the house. Here was an immense fireplace which was used for both cooking and heating. The Dutch oven was part of the fireplace. At one side of the kitchen there was often a cupboard bed. Many Dutch settlers had as their specialty the making of the rush-bottomed chairs that are still to be found in our old North Salem homes. The Dutch introduced this craft to America.

The women in all early Dutch settlements were busy from morning till night. They had to spin yarn, weave cloth, dye it, make clothing, make candles and soap, churn, dry the foods for use in winter, and prepare the meats so they would not spoil. Besides all this, there were the everyday household duties to keep them busy.

We know that the majority of North Salem's Dutch settlers were farmers. But some of them doubtless engaged in other activities, for we have record that Cornelius Steenrod operated grist and saw mills on the Titicus River near the present village of North Salem.

Some of our early pioneers were trappers and hunters and dealt in furs because there were great numbers of beaver, otter, mink, wildcat, and muskrat here. Our Croton Falls neighbor, Mr. Stewart B. Butler, has told us an interesting story about these trappers and hunters. Mr. Butler knows many fascinating reminiscences about

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from England to North Salem are still in the families of a descendant of Jane Grant, and her husband, David Grant, who came to North Salem from Scotland. David Grant later fought in the American Revolution and became a Captain. Jane Grant's cherished possession was a set of silver, a sugar bowl, a cream pitcher, and a teapot, which we examined. The spout of the teapot is shaped like the head of a snake and there is an acorn on the top of the cover. The designs on the teapot and sugar bowl are hammered out by hand and are beautiful. On the side of the teapot is engraved the name of Jane Grant. This silver set is probably over four hundred years old.

The cherished weapon which David Grant brought with him to the New World was an old sword. The name of the maker of the sword, Tomas Alale, is inscribed on the blade. It is undoubtedly a famous Toledo blade from Spain, made in the 1400s. It is the kind of sword carried by the Cavaliers, who wore long capes and floppy hats trimmed with ostrich feathers. The Scotch people called it a Claymore—the kind of sword you thrust with. It is quite long with a very sharp point at the end. It appears to have been used a good deal as it has many nicks on it. There are two steel prongs extending from the bell hilt, which protected the wrist. Swords like this went out of date when muskets came into use.

## AMONG OUR NORTH SALEM PIONEERS



*David Grant, husband of Jane Grant, brought to North Salem as his cherished weapon this rare sword with its famous fifteenth century Toledo blade*

The main interest of the settlers was to get to America safely, hack down trees in order to build homes, and—most important of all—to keep themselves healthy. After their first shelters were built, which were usually crude log cabins, they cleared the land. This meant cutting down trees and getting the stumps up. In their hauling, they used oxen. They also had to get stones out of the fields. Many of the beautiful stone walls, still to be seen in the fields of North Salem, are the result of our pioneers' hard work.

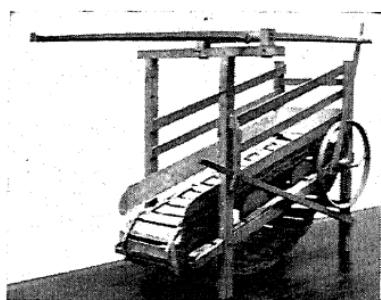
After they had cleared the land in this way, they naturally wanted something to show that they owned it. In North Salem, one such "something" proved to be the 214-year-old Quit-Claim Deed mentioned in the first chapter. Mr. Keeler showed us a photograph copy of this deed and we examined it closely. The writing is difficult to read and the wording is very quaint.

After a while, things began to be prosperous in North

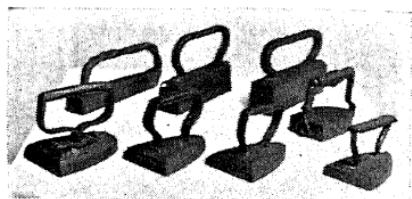
WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG



*Blacksmith's  
Bellows*



*Dog Tread*

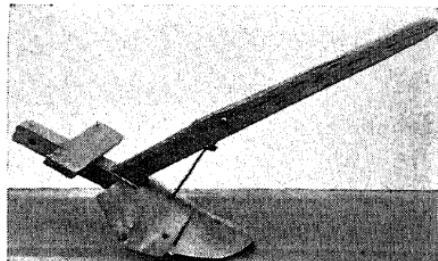


*Old Flatirons*

*Hand-Hollowed  
Barrel*



*Shovel Plow*



*Typical articles used by our North Salem pioneers are in the Farm and Craft Museum of the New York Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York*

## AMONG OUR NORTH SALEM PIONEERS

Salem. At one time, our Town had the distinction of being the most productive buttermaking Town in the State and even the country. One of the farmers in North Salem in those days had a dog named Prince and the dog worked on the treadmill, like that at the left, churning butter. But sometimes Prince got tired and ran away. At that time not only the people but the animals had to work hard.

After our settlers had title to their land, they decided to have a church. At first, it was a mission church called St. James Parish. A Bible brought over to America by the Rev. Epenetus Townsend, first rector of St. James Parish, is in North Salem. "Epenetus" became a common name. Many people were given it, including an early resident of North Salem, Epenetus Howe, an ancestor of Mrs. Frederick T. Nelson, Mr. Walter Howe, and Mrs. Elsie Ryder.

We examined this old Bible, published in 1755 in England by Mark Basset, the very one that the Rev. Townsend brought across the ocean two years later, together with a prayer book. Both the prayer book and the Bible were given by the Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

After the settlers started their church, they needed roads so that they could attend meetings. Before they had roads, they used only trails or bridle paths, which were

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very narrow. For eight or nine months of the year, these first roads were quite good. But the rest of the year, they were muddy or drifted with snow and in terrible condition. Later, turnpikes came and a toll was charged which was used to keep these roads in shape.

Gradually, more and more roads were built in this part of the country, and other means of transportation were also developed. When, in 1839, Floyd Keeler and Jane Grant Purdy went to Casenovia, New York, for their wedding trip, they went from the Purdy home-stead to Peekskill by horse and buggy. There they boarded a sailing vessel for Albany. When they got to Albany, they went by canal boat to Casenovia. It took them four days one way. Today it is possible to go to Casenovia by automobile in about four hours and by airplane in forty minutes.

An ancestor of the Wallace family in our Town landed in this country in the late seventeenth century in an unusual way—as a “shanghaied sailor.” In those days, when shipowners needed sailors or other employees, they bribed, drugged, or intoxicated strong, able-bodied young men and impressed them into the naval service. This was known as the “shanghai practice.” And this is what happened to James Wallace, who was born about 1675, in the little town of Lanark, Scotland.

James was a strong, active lad. One day as he stood

## AMONG OUR NORTH SALEM PIONEERS

on the wharfs of Glasgow watching the ships entering and sailing from that great port, he was "shanghaied" on board a British ship, a man-o'-war, on which he was forced to serve as a sailor for eight years.

One dark night, the ship anchored off a little hamlet on Long Island Sound. Here was his chance for freedom! Quietly he slid down a rope and swam ashore. He managed to remain in hiding from the officers who were seeking him until the next morning when the ship sailed away and he watched it disappear in the distance. Then he secured employment around Norwalk. In 1676, a little over a year after his escape, he married Mary, the daughter of Thomas Hyatt, a veteran of King Philip's War. In 1715, James, with some twenty other men, bought a tract of land from the Ramapo Indians. They called it Ridgefield.

James and Mary Wallace became the parents of eight children, and John and James, their sons, both lived to be very old. In fact, John Wallace was probably one of the oldest men ever to live in our Town. His age was one hundred and two years and five months and seven days. He was buried in the North Salem Cemetery. Six members of our Social Studies class visited the cemetery and saw the grave of John Wallace. It is marked by a very old tombstone which is supported by two iron braces. On the stone is inscribed, "In the memory of John Wallace Who

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Died in the 103rd Year of His Age." Mrs. Charles A. Wallace tells that on the old gentleman's hundredth birthday, an Indian chief came to his home and prepared a feast of venison and wild turkey.

These two brothers were among the early settlers of North Salem and once owned two square miles south of Peach Pond, at the Quaker Meetinghouse. At that time, the land was in Connecticut and later came into the Town of North Salem with the Oblong transaction. The original grant was from the King of England. The stone arch house on Fitkins Corner and other old houses on the way to Ridgefield were the homes of at least eight members of the Wallace family. Jacob Wallace, the youngest brother, who died in 1754 at the age of thirty-three, was the man who in 1747 became the first Supervisor of the old Town of Salem. The rough road that turns from Ridgefield Road to the left near the North Salem Catholic Church is known as Wallace Road.

Among the twelve children of John Wallace, the eleventh child, Epenetus, was born in 1766. He became a prominent physician of North Salem and carried on an extensive practice for many years, making many of his professional calls on horseback. Elbert Wallace remembered, when a small boy, riding on the same horse with his doctor grandfather. Epenetus was also our Town Supervisor in 1804 and again from 1813 to 1817.

AMONG OUR NORTH SALEM PIONEERS



*In the North Salem Cemetery is the grave of John Wallace, said to have been the oldest man ever to have lived in our Town*

It is said that James Wallace, son of Captain James Wallace, was the first to keep a tavern in the town of North Salem, the one later known as Bailey's Tavern. James served for the period during the Revolution in the 4th Regiment of Westchester Militia, under Colonel Thaddeus Crane. Abijah Wallace, a brother of James, was the first blacksmith in North Salem. He, too, saw service in the Revolution and was for several years President of the Board of Trustees for the North Salem Academy. Miss Mary Rich, his great-great-granddaughter,

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still has his account books and an old chair in which he often sat. We greatly appreciate the valuable information which Miss Rich has given us in connection with this and other stories of early North Salem history.

Dr. Epenetus Wallace was the father of ten children, among whom his son Charles, whose home was near the present Casey's Crossing, became the father of Myra, who married John Purdy of Croton Falls. Mr. Elbert C. Purdy, the present Supervisor of the Town, is the son of John and Myra Purdy. It is interesting to note that Supervisor Purdy is the great-grandson of Dr. Epenetus Wallace, who served in the same capacity 140 years ago.

Elbert Wallace, born in 1834, was the third child of Charles Wallace. Many of our present residents will remember Mr. Elbert Wallace, a prosperous farmer of the Town for many years. He died in 1926 at the ripe old age of ninety-two. His son, Charles A. Wallace, and family now live on the Wallace homestead on Titicus Road, just west of Salem Center.

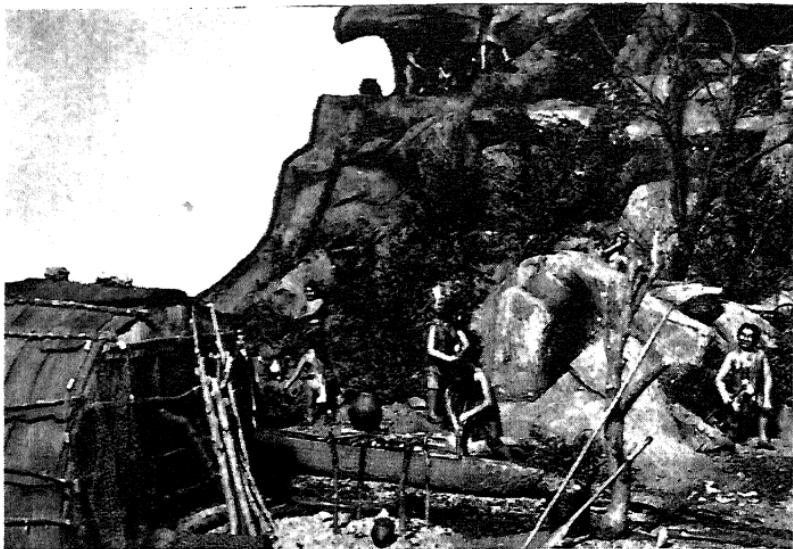
## CHAPTER THREE

### *The Indians Our First Settlers Found*

IN OUR SCHOOL MUSEUM, we have a collection of sixty-four Indian arrowheads that were picked up in the fields of North Salem. More continue to be discovered each year when our farmers are busy with their spring plowing or our gardeners prepare the soil for their planting. In some spots, such as the Ryder farm near Peach Lake, a great many have been found. To show you just what these North Salem arrowheads look like, we asked our schoolmate, Harvey Scott, son of the well-known illustrator, H. Winfield Scott of Croton Falls, to make the drawings of them, which are reproduced in this book.

As we ride to school in the bus, we pass North Salem landmarks that have Indian names—Pequenakonck Road, Croton River, Titicus River and Reservoir. “Titicus” is

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*In this exhibit at the Museum of the American Indian are articles typical of Kitchawank craft—a fish trap and nets, pottery, a dugout canoe, and a shelter*

a name which is derived from the Indian “Mughtiti-coos.” “Croton” comes from “Kitchawan.” And we think of the days when the Indians roamed over the hills of our Town, and especially of those who were here when the first white settlers arrived.

History tells us that the Indians engaged in several wars with the Dutch settlers of America, but in 1645 a treaty of peace was made. This doubtless accounts for the fact that no stories of trouble between the Indians and our North Salem settlers have come down to us.

Our local Indians belonged to the Mahican tribe, of

## INDIANS OUR FIRST SETTLERS FOUND

which Katonah was chief. Katonah, whose name was sometimes spelled with a C instead of a K, was the sachem, or chief, of the Mahican tribe in the late 1600s and the early 1700s, and he claimed for them all land as far south as Long Island Sound and westward to the Hudson River. From the name of his tribe, his territory was called Mahicannituk.

Whenever a new settlement was made by the white men in those days, either under Dutch or English rule, a license had to be obtained from the Colonial Government to buy land from the local Indian tribe. Then an agreement was made and the land was usually paid for with articles that had been manufactured in Europe. As we have seen, Stephanus Van Cortlandt bought his Manor in this way. A large piece of land near North Salem was once sold by Katonah's ancestors for such articles as coats, knives, and kettles. Nearly all of our neighbor Town of Bedford was bought for four English coats.

In the latter part of the seventeenth century, Chief Katonah, who was then growing old, sold a great deal of land. Old deeds of sale, still in existence, show the mark he used instead of a signature, for he could not write his name. Such marks and also fingerprints were very commonly used in those days when the Indians transacted business with the white settlers.

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Shortly after he sold his land, Chief Katonah and his tribe moved westward, where he died. One Westchester legend says that his body was brought back for burial to a hill near the present village of Katonah, which was named for him. On that hill are two large boulders which, so the story goes, mark the burial place of Katonah and his favorite wife, Cantitoe. Cantitoe's name has been perpetuated in that of Cantitoe Road in the Katonah district.

In North Salem, the band of Indians who were here when our first settlers arrived were called Kitchawanks and they were part of Chief Katonah's Mahican tribe. Their name came from the fact that the territory claimed by them, under Katonah, extended westward to the highlands of the Hudson River. For the word "Kitchawank" meant "people at the foot of the mountains." The Kitchawanks, as members of the Mahican tribe, belonged to the Wappingers Indian Confederacy.

The Kitchawanks were slender in build but with broad shoulders. Their skin was light ochre in color. And they had fine black hair streaked with brown. They lived in villages that were usually located along brooks called *sebens*, or beside some larger body of water. Their largest village was Kitchawan—now become "Croton"—where they also had one of the strongest forts in this part of New York State.

## INDIANS OUR FIRST SETTLERS FOUND

The Kitchawanks lived in dwellings made by erecting a framework of poles which was then covered with bark. There was one entrance, and also an opening at the top from which smoke could escape. There was very little furnishing in them. The bed was simply a pile of evergreen boughs covered with the skins of animals. Fire was built in the center of the dirt floor, and the wild animals brought in by the Kitchawank hunters were cooked there. When these Indians ate, they sat on the floor and took their food from handmade wooden bowls.

Fishing was one of the chief occupations of the Kitchawanks. Their fishhooks were made from the bones of birds' wings, and their nets were woven from deer sinews with a flat wooden needle. One of their fishing grounds in the Town of North Salem was where the Titicus River (the "Mughtiticoos") empties into the Croton (the "Kitchawan"). The settlers' name for this spot was Shad Hole because each spring shad ran there from the Hudson. In these early days of our Town, shad were so plentiful that Indians from Connecticut also came here to fish. When the Kitchawanks caught more fish than they could use at the time, they smoked or dried them. Near their villages, racks were to be seen on which fish, meat, and corn were hanging to dry. This was their way of preserving it.

The Kitchawanks also did a great deal of hunting for

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food and for their clothing as well, since they used for that purpose the skins of the animals that they killed. Beaver, otter, mink, deer, and bear were everywhere. And buffalo were so plentiful at one time that the Titicus was known as Buffalo Creek to our first settlers. One old history book says that in 1656 in North Salem "buffaloes were tolerably plenty. They keep to the southwest where few go."

The Kitchawanks not only hunted with bows and arrows but they also set traps. Poundridge, a village not far from North Salem, got its name from one of these early traps made by the Kitchawanks. For when the English came to this locality, on a certain ridge they found a trap in good condition—an acre of land enclosed with a kind of fence, fourteen feet high. Since the English called a trap a "pound," and since this trap was on a ridge, the name "Poundridge" came into existence. When the Kitchawanks built a trap of this kind, they drove deer through the opening, then quickly closed it, thus capturing a large number of the animals.

The Kitchawanks raised maize (corn), beans, and a little ceremonial tobacco. Their implements for preparing the ground were crude, such as large clamshells and the shoulder blades of deer for hoes.

Like other Indians, the Kitchawanks were very skillful with their hands. In making their animal-skin cloth-

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ing, they usually put the fur inside and the smooth side of the skin outside. For other articles, they used local wood, clay, shells, stones, and bones. Their spearheads were from two to eight inches in length, while their



*These North Salem arrowheads are in our School Museum.*

*Drawn by Harvey Scott, Central High School student*

arrowheads were sometimes shorter. In addition to arrowheads, stone relics such as gouges, pipes, scrapers, wooden bowls, knife blades, axes, and pieces of worked bone and fragments of pottery have been unearthed in Westchester County.

The Kitchawank women were very skillful in molding clay and fashioning it into pottery, and in making baskets which were used for their daily work such as gathering corn and for storage. Mrs. Carrie Paddock, who was born in North Salem in 1860, remembers a visit she made with her grandmother to a group of the Kitchawank Indians. "I recall going to see them at the foot of a big hill. They were dressed in Indian costume and my grandmother bought one of their baskets for me."

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The canoes used by our Indians for travel on our rivers were the dugout type. These dugout canoes they made by charring out the center of a log with hot stones and controlling the fire by putting wet clay on it. The advantage of these dugout canoes was that they



*Deep in the woods near Bogtown, this old Indian burial ground tells its silent story*

carried many more passengers than the light birchbark canoes, although the latter were speedier. In the Indian exhibit at the American Museum of Natural History, a dugout canoe may be seen, such as the Kitchawanks constructed.

In our Indian project, we were especially interested in the burial customs of the Kitchawanks, for one of our class took us to an old Indian burial ground in the

## INDIANS OUR FIRST SETTLERS FOUND

woods at Bogtown. Also, in our school museum, we have some Indian bones which were unearthed when the men were excavating at the time our school was built. It may be, therefore, that our school stands on the site of another Indian cemetery. When an Indian died, his body was placed in a sitting position and food and implements were buried with him. He faced the Southwest, which was considered "The Land of the Blessed."

Gradually, with the coming of our early settlers, the Indians were pushed westward. The last place inhabited by the Indians in Westchester County was Indian Hill in Yorktown. Some of our North Salem Indians went to Massachusetts; some to western New York State; others went as far west as Michigan and Wisconsin. Mahican-nituk was no more.

Mr. Stewart B. Butler recalls the fact that the last Indian in our vicinity was a man called "Absalom Mooney" or "Absalom Money." His name is recorded in a North Salem census of the 1700s.

The picture here of the exhibit of Indian life, which is in the Museum of the American Indian in New York City, was given to us for this chapter because it shows typical activities of our North Salem Indians. For although this exhibit was prepared to show the life and habitation of the Manhattan Indians, an Algonkian tribe which occupied Manhattan Island at the time of the ar-

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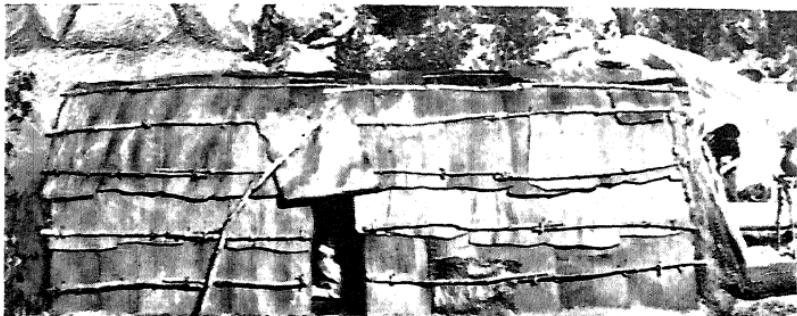
rival of the first Europeans in the seventeenth century, it applies to our North Salem Indians as well.

Residents of North Salem have always been interested in our Indians. In addition to the Indian names we have kept for our rivers and other spots, we have our local hearsay tales about them. These are not authentic but are part of our North Salem Indian tradition. It is said, for example, that the Indians used to worship the Great Boulder. Another local story is that, on one of the hills rising above old Hardscrabble Road, the Indians built a lodge for a special meeting place during their hunting. They called this lodge Hunting House and the hill on which it was built Hunting House Hill, and from it they used to send up their signal smoke.

In an old Croton Falls newspaper, lent us by Mr. Benjamin Smith, we found the following legend. "An Indian maiden named Pequonah, for she was of the Pequona tribe, passed in moving procession with the chiefs and sturdy warriors of the tribe to the burial place of the Awamapoghs. A young chief of the Kitchawanks looked upon the daughter of the eastern tribe and the old, old story awoke the heart of the red man.

"Along the ranges of hills, over the ridges of Somers, even unto the burial place did the young chief go. Even then speech could not be obtained, but a feathered arrow, with a fern leaf attached, fell at the feet of the

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*A model at the Museum of the American Indian of a typical Long House, covered with bark, used by Eastern Woodland Indians such as our Kitchawank tribe*

maiden. She knew and read the token and, loosing from her decorated tunic the quill of a sea gull, she dropped it on the ground as the homeward march began.

"On the return, at the junction of the Kitchawan, now the Croton River, a battle took place. The young chief was with his own people but he wore on his arm the feather of the gull. And among his enemies, he sought the maiden of his heart. In the strife, he did find her, only to be stricken with the white flint as he reached the hilltop in the woods, with the maiden by his side.

"He sank to the ground and while his lifeblood slowly oozed away, the girl Pequonah mourned. But all was futile, and in the young chief's dying agony, he cried, '*Pequonah, inlas sequonk homa Tonka spira pra!*' Which means, 'Pequonah, the Spirit of Kitchawank will await you here.' "

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *Early Life in North Salem*

FROM OLD RECORDS, family stories, and the many articles that have come down from the first days in North Salem, we can get a very good idea of the life then. North Salem has always been a community of homes. At first, as we have seen, these homes were log cabins and the furnishings were for the most part plain and simple. But the settlers were contented as long as they were permitted to enjoy freedom and peace, and could keep strong and healthy. And as soon as they could, they built other homes, some of which may still be seen in our Town.

The rifle and spinning wheel were in nearly every home. The rifle was used in hunting for food. The spinning wheel was used for spinning the thread that was woven into cloth for clothing and other household needs.

## EARLY LIFE IN NORTH SALEM

Our settlers raised their own sheep and flax, and made their own dyes. The color most preferred was blue. A woman would go over to her neighbor's and spin and talk at the same time. Our settlers made their own soap with fats and wood ashes. Their candles were made from fats and other greases.

At first, the animals roamed at large. Some were caught, killed, and salted for winter. Many homes had feather beds made from goose feathers. Besides meat, there were other foods, of course, such as dairy products, vegetables, and fruits that were hung to dry in the cellar. Each farm had a dirt cellar for storing winter vegetables and also a smokehouse filled with various kinds of meat, such as that of hogs.



*In old vegetable cellars such as this at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Albert B. Tibbets, our ancestors stored food for the winter*

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

In the early days of our Town, as we have said, the people worked hard from morning till night. And it was not so very long before there were fine farms in North Salem, worked with what seems to us today to be crude equipment. But the job was done, even so, and done well.

Later, various of the North Salem residents worked in the paper, saw and grist mills here. But many also continued to make articles in their own homes. This was commonly known as cottage manufacturing.

Boys and girls in those earliest days did not have our kind of schools. In fact, there were no schoolhouses at first. But sometimes a lady would conduct a school in her home. Usually there were from six to eight pupils and the tuition was very low.

Even though some highways were constructed in the earliest days of our Town, transportation continued to be uncomfortable all during these horse-and-buggy days, and very difficult indeed during part of every year. News traveled slowly. There were no local newspapers in North Salem before the Revolution, but papers brought in from the larger near-by communities often contained some news about the rural areas.

The pupils of our Seventh Grades have been very fortunate in knowing families in North Salem whose homes contain furniture and utensils used by their ancestors during the Revolutionary days. The entire class

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had the privilege of visiting two of these homes, that of Mrs. Thomas L. Purdy of Purdys and that of Dr. and Mrs. Matthew F. Ratchford on Dingle Ridge. In both houses, we saw many articles used by the family ancestors, which give a good picture of life in the early days.

In the large kitchen of the Ratchford home, where Joseph Bailey, who was Mrs. Ratchford's fifth great-grandfather, settled in 1740, is a large fireplace such as was commonly used during the period of the Revolution. In the fireplace hang handmade utensils, including a frying pan, a heavy teakettle, and two large forks. On the top of the teakettle is an eagle that had been stamped there and was the symbol of goods manufactured in the United States. Ruth Lyon, who was Mrs. Ratchford's great-grandmother, owned the two forks. Peregrine White, who was the first white child born in the Plymouth Colony, was the great-grandfather of Ruth Lyon.

Near the fireplace, on the floor, is a perforated metal box with a metal handle and a wooden frame. In the olden days, the box was filled with hot coals and carried to the Southeast Church in what is now Brewster in Putnam County, to be used as a foot warmer during the services by one of Mrs. Ratchford's ancestors. A copper bed warmer, with a handle of pear wood, hangs near the fireplace. It was customary to fill it with coals and then rub it over the beds to keep them warm.

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The Dutch oven beside the fireplace is lined with bricks and extends four feet back. In early days, a fire was started in it and when it was hot enough, the coals were raked out and the food to be baked was put into the oven. The pewter plates on the shelf were used on the dining table. On the closet doors over the fireplace are hinges formed in the letters of H and L. The H stands for Holy and the L for Lord. These hinges were supposed to have kept the evil spirits from the homes.



*Old Iron Ware of Revolutionary days, above,  
and a mid-nineteenth century stove, at the left*

A rare piece of maple furniture called a wagon seat faces the fireplace. This was given its name because it was placed in the wagon for the ladies to sit on while going to church. A cherry drop-leaf table stands in the center of the room. In the early days of our Town, most of the furniture was made from either maple, birch, cherry, apple, or pear wood because these were most

## EARLY LIFE IN NORTH SALEM

easily obtained. Mahogany was rare and used mostly for decorative purposes. A handmade walnut mirror hangs in the dining room.

The dishes of Revolutionary days were most interesting. The earliest type of cup had no handle and was taken from the saucer and put on a small plate of Sandwich glass. The tea was poured into the deep saucer, from which the person drank. The silverware was shaped somewhat differently from ours of today. The glasses Mrs. Ratchford has of the Revolutionary period were very attractive. They were hand-blown and hand-painted. Because of the designs on them, the goblets she has were known as the thumb-and-waffle print. Tall parfait glasses were also used at that time.

In the dining room is a maple, colonial highchair which was made by Mrs. Ratchford's great-great-grandfather and has been handed down from generation to generation. An old Chandler clock with mahogany inlay stands in the living room. Eli Terry, the first clockmaker in America, made another clock that is in the Ratchford home. It still has the original wooden works. The Chandler clock and a Chippendale mirror, which are in the living room, were made sometime between 1740 and 1780. The eagle design on these two articles shows they were American-manufactured products, while the scroll on certain other pieces of furniture shows the influence

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

of English cabinetmakers. Typical of the furniture used during the Revolutionary days is a wing chair with a solid cherry frame.

During the Puritan settlement of America, an apple wood table which was put together with pin hinges was made. The Hepplewhite mahogany desk is a very valuable piece of furniture which was made in 1750. It has an arrowhead design, typical of the early trim, and inside are secret compartments.

Instead of square card tables such as we use today, some of our Revolutionary ancestors used round mahogany tables which they called game tables. Sometimes many kinds of wood such as satinwood, ebony, maple, birch, apple, and light and dark mahogany were used in making one of these tables.

Sandwich glass lamps filled with whale oil were used to illuminate the rooms. Candles were also used for light and were extinguished by candle snuffers.

In one of the Ratchford bedrooms is the type of bed used in Revolutionary days. It is a maple bed with four posts and a canopy. It has a reversible, hand-woven coverlet of wool and linen. In summer the linen side was the one that showed on top while in winter the woolen side was uppermost. Because the beds were higher than they are today, bed steps were used. These bed steps were also convenient for reaching the tops of the chests.

## EARLY LIFE IN NORTH SALEM

In the olden days, too, children had their own furniture. The children's chairs were very interesting because they were often made from different kinds of wood. One rocker on a chair would be made from cherry while the other would be maple. A very attractive piece of furniture at Mrs. Ratchford's was the child's dresser.

Dresses with long, full skirts and tight bodices were the style in Revolutionary days. Mrs. Ratchford showed us a wedding dress typical of that period.

The Purdy homestead, which we also visited, is near the Hangman's Oak. Our hostess was Mrs. Thomas L. Purdy, owner of the Purdy homestead. The house is white and very attractive. It is an authentic building of Revolutionary days. The framework was erected on



*The lovely old Purdy homestead in Purdys village was started on the day of the Battle of Bunker Hill (June 17, 1775)*

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

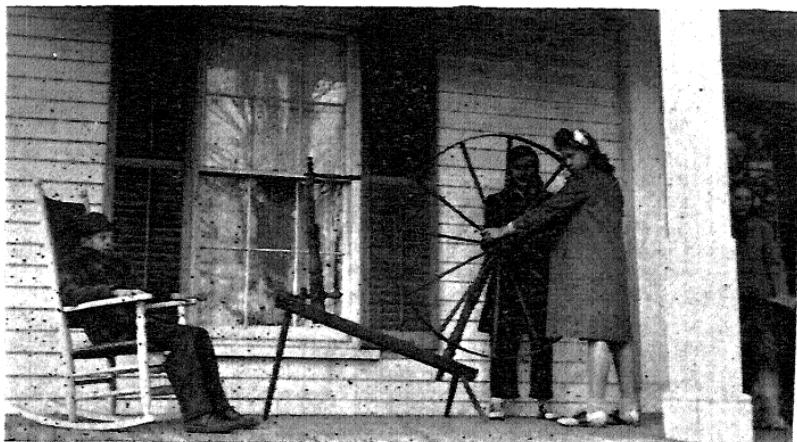
June 17, 1775, which was the date of the battle of Bunker Hill. The nails used in the building were made by hand.

The interior of the house has been kept as much as possible as it was in olden days. In the spacious living room, during the time of the American Revolution, Mr. Joseph Purdy and his neighbors watched for cattle thieves. The first thing the class observed in that room was a small clipper ship hanging over a beautiful fireplace. This clipper ship is an exact copy of a ship that fought in the War of 1812. Mrs. Purdy told an interesting story about this ship. She had an ancestor who was an old sea captain. His name was Mr. O. Ladd. It seems that he wished to leave his money to his relatives but the will was complicated and the case stayed in court till about twenty-five years ago. By that time there were about a hundred relatives, so each one received only a small amount. Mrs. Purdy, in honor of the old sea captain, bought this old clipper ship model with her share.

The fireplace in the next room has an old Dutch oven inside it. Here there is an old waffle iron with a long handle. It had to be red-hot before the batter could be put into it. There is also a foot warmer made of perforated metal. There is a spit and cauldron inside the fireplace also. In one corner of the room there is a large grandfather's clock.

Next, the class went into the library, which used to be

## EARLY LIFE IN NORTH SALEM



*This spinning wheel heirloom of North Salem is typical of those once found in all the homes of our pioneers*

a small bedroom where the mother and father slept. The children who were not big enough to be taken away from their mother slept under their mother's bed in a trundle bed. When they were older, they went upstairs to sleep. There is a picture of the Hangman's Oak with the Purdys' family tree in this room.

When we entered the immense kitchen, Mrs. Purdy pointed out another fireplace. There were many interesting things in the kitchen. Adjoining the kitchen is the "water room," where there is a big tub full of cool spring water which in the early days the family used for their water supply. The room above the water room was called the "tramp room," where strangers were allowed to sleep. But before the tramps were allowed up there, they were

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

searched, and if they carried any matches, these were taken away. When at last they did get into the room, the door was locked after them. There is a chimney in the water room that extends upstairs and into a room that was called the dark room. People used to be afraid to go in there, but it is now used as a clothes closet. There was probably a fireplace in every room in the olden days.

When we visited the home of Mrs. Frederick T. Nelson at North Salem, we saw many more interesting things. In addition to articles of furniture, similar to those viewed in the other two homes, were a trunk made of horsehair, which was carried in a buggy by Mrs. Nelson's ancestors when on their honeymoon to Niagara Falls, dishes of Lafayette ware, and a spill holder. The spill holder resembled a vase and held twisted pieces of paper which served as matches. The spills were lighted in the fireplace and then used by the men to light their pipes.

Because we had heard about Epenetus Howe, we asked Mrs. Nelson to tell us about him, for she is one of his North Salem descendants. The following is Mrs. Nelson's account of him and his family.

The How family of North Salem is descended from Edward How, who arrived in Massachusetts from England in the year 1635 on board the good ship *Truelove*. His descendants made their way to Greenwich, Connecticut, to South Salem, New York, to Ridgefield,

## EARLY LIFE IN NORTH SALEM

Connecticut, and to North Salem. Epenetus Howe of Ridgefield, who was born in 1743, was a maker of hats and was the ancestor of the Howe families of North Salem, as they now spell their name. His grandsons, Epenetus and James, were prominent in our Town a hundred years ago, active businessmen and interested in the exhibition, or circus, business. James R. Howe lived on what is commonly known to us as the Grant place.

Epenetus Howe built the house now owned by Mr. Lorenzo Power in North Salem, and the paper mill which Mr. Howe owned, with its pond and the famous chalybeate spring, were in the river valley opposite. Mr. Maurice Chalom now owns this property.

Tradition has it that work on the house was begun on Washington's Birthday, 1828, on which date the weather was mild and continued to be so, so that construction was not interrupted by frost or cold. In 1826, Epenetus Howe took his bride, Ann Eliza Hunt, on a wedding journey by horse and chaise as far as Auburn, New York, and thence by the newly constructed Erie Canal to Niagara Falls—a great trip for those days.

Epenetus Howe's son, William H. Ireland Howe, was the organizer and President of the American Condensed Milk Company, later called the New York Condensed Milk Company, which was one of the principal businesses of the Town in the period after the Civil War. He also

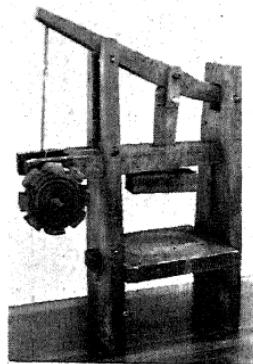
## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

was the inventor of an important machine for sealing tin cans. He was the father of George and Thomas Howe and of Mrs. Frederick T. Nelson.

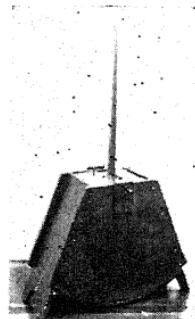
Another prominent member of the North Salem Howes was James R. Howe of Brooklyn, who had as his summer home the place which is now the residence of Mr. Sydney Gilbert. This James R. Howe was a member of Congress from Brooklyn for a number of terms and also served as Register of Kings County. He presented to the City of Brooklyn the fine statue of Washington which adorns the plaza of the Williamsburg Bridge.

The amusements of the people of North Salem in the olden days were of a simpler nature than ours are today, but nevertheless young and old had many a good time at quilting bees, singing-school evenings, husking bees, dances, church socials, and with water and winter sports.

*Sweep Churn*



*Cheese Press: Mid-eighteenth Century*



## EARLY LIFE IN NORTH SALEM

The favorite old swimming hole was in the Titicus River. There were plenty of millponds, too, which froze deeply in the winter. On them, nearly every afternoon during the cold weather, children were to be seen skating. But they were not allowed to stay out late at night. In the evening, the older people came out with their skates, gathering around a bonfire on the ice when they became cold. After the skating party was over, they were apt to go to one of the taverns for refreshments and dancing.

In those days, Peach Lake was as popular a center as it is today. Then it was called Peach Pond and the Vail family land adjoined it then, as now. Starting with Thomas Vail, who was born in 1739, there have been seven generations of Vails there and five generations at the Peach Lake home. The family homestead stood on Dingle Ridge where Mrs. Duncan Bulkley now lives.

One of the most popular of the seven taverns in our Town was the Bailey Tavern in what is now the village of North Salem. This tavern had a ballroom with a suspended floor that added rhythm to the dancing feet. Many fashionable gatherings and parties took place in Bailey's Tavern. People came to them from miles around. Although they had no orchestra in those days, such as we now have, there were always willing fiddlers, and later on there were accordion players and piano players.

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG



*Erected about 1755 by John Yerkes, this popular old tavern, now gone, near Salem Center was the meeting place from which the captors of Major André set out*

Sometimes the fiddling might be a little scratchy, but who cared? The lovely old square dances were graceful.

Our fine old North Salem homes were also the center of much hospitality. The June and Titus homes in North Salem were frequently open for social functions. Informal gatherings were daily occurrences at our taverns, where travelers enjoyed staying. We can get an idea of the early rates from an old account book of Bailey's Tavern in which it is stated that the board there was a dollar a week, with three meals a day. Another old account book of a Salem Center tavern records that beef was one cent a pound.

Itinerant peddlers, clock repairers, weavers, black-

## EARLY LIFE IN NORTH SALEM

smiths, and other craftsmen who often came from over Connecticut way, brought their share of news. It was a saying that they were the possessors of "steady tongues." Certainly they knew all the gossip! When our early residents heard that a peddler had come, men and women dropped their work and the children ran in from play to see what he had brought and hear what he had to tell. As a rule, instead of selling his wares for money, a peddler bartered. If he saw some pewter or a chair that he knew to be valuable, he would trade something for it.

Other visitors to our Town included an occasional organ grinder. These organ grinders, who sometimes brought their monkeys, were not always welcome in our taverns, as we may see from the following old sign:

*Four pence a night for a bed—  
Six pence with supper.  
No more than five to sleep in a bed.  
No boots to be worn in bed—  
Organ grinders to sleep in wash shed.*

In addition to our taverns, our stores and, later, our post offices were centers of interest. It is said that the stoop of the Salem Center Post Office, which was formerly located across the road from where it is now, was a favorite place for the dickering in horse deals. The men always took their time in these deals, with the result that both horses and wives had to learn the art of patience!

## CHAPTER FIVE

### *North Salem in the American Revolution*

DURING THE Revolutionary War, General Washington spent a total of more than seven months' active time in Westchester County, or about one sixth of his whole time in the field during the war. From the first, he could count on the loyalty of the residents of North Salem to the cause of freedom. Troops were raised here and all rendered valiant service. We have been much interested in finding out about them.

North Salem gave a number of officers to the Army during the Revolutionary War: Colonel Thaddeus Crane, Captain Gilbert Budd, First Lieutenant Jesse Truesdale, Second Lieutenant John Van Wart, Captain Solomon Close, Captain David Grant, Captain Lewis Rich, and Captain Jesse Trumbull. The Crane homestead is one of our outstanding historic landmarks in the village

## NORTH SALEM IN THE REVOLUTION

of North Salem, and the small white house beyond it was the home of First Lieutenant Jesse Truesdale.

A Town Militia was organized, which drilled on what are now the playgrounds of our North Salem village school. Miss Mary Rich tells us that her ancestor, Captain Lewis Rich, directed this Militia.

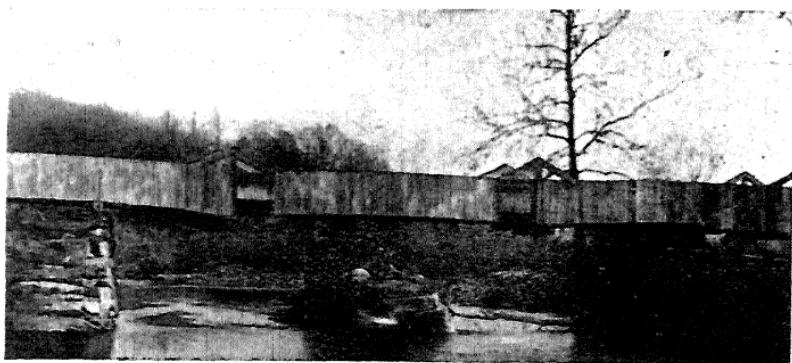
Although no battles of the American Revolution were fought in our Town, North Salem saw a great deal of Revolutionary activity since it was on the main route from Connecticut to lower Westchester County. As we said in Chapter One, we have reason to believe that the Marquis de Lafayette spent at least one night in the DeLancey Manor House, now our Town Hall, when he was organizing his regiment of Light Infantry, raised



*It was from this home that Thaddeus Crane went forth to defend our liberty in the American Revolution*

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through enlistments of men residing in western Connecticut and upper Westchester County. It is also said that De Rochambeau and his officers, passing through with his French forces to join Washington, camped at our Town Hall for two days and occupied the building.



*This old wooden Dean's Bridge was the scene of stirring events during the American Revolution*

Over historic Dean's Bridge, which was on the main east and west highway toward Somers, in April 1777, General Tryon galloped with his British soldiers after the burning of Danbury. Over this same bridge a Tory cattle thief escaped, but his companion was captured by Mr. Joseph Purdy and a patriotic committee.

Our Town Hall building was used throughout the Revolution as a jail and courthouse for the trial of Tories, according to the Bulletin of the Westchester County Historical Society. It was also the repository of our

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Westchester County records during the Revolution. These records were removed for safety from the southern part of the County and taken first to Bedford village, then to North Salem.

There were many acts of individual bravery throughout those turbulent days. Among them, the exploits that follow have been handed down to us as part of our own North Salem history.

Although he was forty-six years of age when hostilities broke out, Thaddeus Crane at once enlisted and on September 13, 1775, was commissioned Captain in the North Salem Company of the 2nd (Middle) Regiment of Westchester Militia. On October 19, 1775, he was commissioned Second Major of the regiment and his place in the North Salem Company was taken by Jesse Trumbull, January 19, 1776.

During the year 1776 and early in 1777, great personal sorrow came to Major Crane in the deaths of his two sons and his wife. But he kept valiantly on, and during 1777 and on into 1779, he served in the Assembly. His legislative duties did not, however, keep him from active duty. Again in the field, he took an important part in the Battle of Ridgefield, April 26, 1777. During the combat, he was shot through the body and, as an old record states, "bled his boots full."

The following account is taken from the Bulletin of

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

the Westchester Historical Society: "He was carried to the rear and laid out on a large rock to have his wounds dressed. The surgeon did not expect him to survive but, probing for the bullet, found it just under the skin of the left shoulder blade. It had passed through his body, puncturing his lungs."

Three years later, Major Crane, now commissioned as Colonel, was able again to serve in battle. In 1784, he was Supervisor of "Upper Salem." And when he died at the age of seventy-four, on September 1, 1803, a most distinguished and useful life was brought to a close. He is buried in the cemetery of North Salem. One of Colonel Thaddeus Crane's sons married a Purdy, a great-aunt of Mr. I. Hart Purdy.

Many people have heard of the British spy, Major André, but not so many know about the men who captured him. They were North Salem residents named Paulding, Williams, and Van Wart. Through their quick thinking, Major André was caught and West Point was saved.

The portion of North Salem, south of the Titicus River, now known as Bogtown, in Revolutionary days was called Yerkes Corner. John Yerkes was the proprietor of a general store and tavern there that was used as a meeting place for the discussion of current problems. One such problem was the great loss of cattle stolen by

## NORTH SALEM IN THE REVOLUTION

cattle thieves. John Paulding and his two companions, talking this situation over at John Yerkes' tavern, decided that they must go out and try to capture the thieves. They failed in that mission but performed a greater one for their country.

As they were going along, looking for the cattle thieves, they saw a man coming toward them on horseback. For some reason, which they could not later explain, they felt they should order him to stop and dismount. It happened that John Paulding had on a Hessian coat and when Major André—for it was he—saw it, he thought Paulding was on the British side. What he said then made the three North Salem men really suspicious and they searched the stranger. In his stocking they found the plans for the capture of West Point.

When Major André realized that he was in the power of enemies, he tried to buy his way to freedom. He was, of course, unsuccessful in this. Paulding, Williams, and Van Wart then took him to Colonel Sheldon's headquarters, which were at the old Jacob Gilbert home in Salem, now in the town of Lewisboro. The party arrived there early in the morning, and at once Major André wrote a letter to General Washington pleading for his life. The following day, a messenger came from General Washington with orders that the prisoner be taken to a destination on the Hudson River. As the prisoner and

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

one hundred mounted men were riding along the roads of North Salem on their way to the river, they found a messenger waiting for them at a churchyard, with orders that they proceed by back roads. Major André was on the same horse which he rode the day of his capture.



*It was from this spot that Major André wrote a letter to George Washington admitting his identity*

Today, near the spot where the old Gilbert home once stood, is a marble slab which reads:

*Behind This Wall Stood The House of  
Jacob Gilbert In Which  
Major John André Was Held Prisoner  
September 24 and 25, 1780  
In This House He Wrote to  
Washington*

## NORTH SALEM IN THE REVOLUTION

Records show that in 1780 Congress granted a pension to Paulding and his companions, Williams and Van Wart, for capturing Major André.

One of the most famous patriot Intelligence officers of the American Revolution was Enoch Crosby, who lived in our neighborhood for a period of years and whose exploits furnished the novelist, James Fenimore Cooper, with material for his story, *The Spy*. Since the hero in this novel is called "Harvey Birch," the hill on which our Croton Falls School stands has been named the Harvey Birch Hill.

The great-grandfather of Mr. Stewart B. Butler of Croton Falls was a cousin of Enoch Crosby. And the great-great-grandfather of Mr. Ferd T. Hopkins of Somers—Mr. Solomon Hopkins—married Enoch Crosby's sister. The following information was given us by Mr. Ferd T. Hopkins: "Enoch Crosby was born in the Town of Southeast, Putnam County. He was working in Danbury as a shoemaker when the Revolution started. Enlisting at once, he became a member of the Expeditionary Forces that attacked Montreal and Quebec. Shortly after his return, he decided to enlist in the Westchester County Committee of Safety and to see Colonel John Jay, who had organized the Committee for the general protection of the County.

"His first experience as counter-Intelligence officer

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

was on his trip to White Plains, when he met a traveler who thought Crosby was going south to join what was then known as the lower or Tory party. This traveler told Crosby about a secret Tory society in the neighborhood which held meetings in a structure that had been covered with hay to give it the appearance of a haystack. Crosby was then taken into this society's confidence and at the first opportunity reported his findings to Colonel Jay, who immediately dispatched troops and captured this secret Tory society's members.

"At Colonel Jay's request, Crosby then entered the service as an Intelligence officer to seek out information for the Westchester County Committee of Safety. His work in gathering information was so helpful to the Revolution that he later became a member of General Washington's Intelligence Department.

"At the time of the Revolution, Solomon Hopkins, Enoch Crosby's brother-in-law, lived in that part of Dutchess County which later became Putnam County, on the road leading to the present Carmel Country Club. It was in this house that Crosby sought refuge and rest on a number of occasions."

Mr. Hopkins also remembers from his father's reminiscences that the house was on the side of the hill. The rear of the second story was not many feet above the ground, which was favorable for Crosby when escaping. The

## NORTH SALEM IN THE REVOLUTION

house was torn down nearly fifty years ago by the City of New York when they acquired the property for watershed purposes.

During the time that Enoch Crosby was a shoemaker, he traveled with a pack on his back and visited homes in our vicinity to repair shoes and boots. He would do his work while the family gathered around the open fireplace. He often stayed in one place several days. Continuing this practice as an Intelligence soldier, he was able to pick up from various people important information as to their opinions and feelings and the side they favored in the Revolution. He would immediately report what he had learned. Crosby was arrested numerous times by both the British and American forces—the latter not knowing about his secret work—and was condemned to death on several occasions but always managed to escape.

Enoch Crosby died while residing on a farm in the Town of Southeast on the middle branch of the Croton River now covered by the lake, just south of Tilly Foster. The New York State Historical Society has the letter which Enoch Crosby sent to the Federal Government, telling about his services. The purpose of that letter was to establish recognition for his veteran's pension.

Several of us went to the Gilead Cemetery near Carmel to secure the Crosby monument picture. The following inscription is on the monument.

WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG



*To the Memory of Enoch Crosby  
(“Harvey Birch”)  
Patriot spy of the American Revolution  
June 5, 1750–June 28, 1835*

*He braved danger and death that this land might be free  
to the cause of Liberty. He offered his all without hope of  
reward. Honored by Washington, revered by his country  
men, We who inherit the freedom for which he toiled,  
raise this monument to his glorious memory.*

## NORTH SALEM IN THE REVOLUTION

Sergeant Jeremiah Keeler, the great-great-grandfather of Mr. Floyd Y. Keeler, was another prominent resident of the Town of North Salem who distinguished himself in the Revolutionary War. When a young man of eighteen, he enlisted in the 5th Connecticut Regiment on February 24, 1777. Shortly after his enlistment, however, he was transferred and served in the Light Infantry under Marquis de Lafayette.

At Yorktown, Sergeant Keeler won the praise and admiration of his leader due to his valiant fighting and skill shown during that battle. Two English fortifications were captured, one by the French and the other by the Americans. Sergeant Keeler was the second man among the Americans to leap over the redoubt. It was his skill in organizing the soldiers there which kept the enemy from counterattacking. Years later, when Jeremiah Keeler was reminded of his brave deed, he would remark, "Those were the days when I was spry." After the Revolutionary War ended, to show how highly he valued the services of Jeremiah Keeler, Lafayette presented him with a sword.

One amusing anecdote about Sergeant Keeler has to do with a request he made of one of the early "freighters" of our neighborhood. In those days, when driving around the countryside was so difficult for long periods of time, men who drove to market with local produce were very

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

important. Driving from house to house, gathering up butter, eggs, and poultry, these freighters at the same time took orders from our farmers and their wives for the articles they wished to have purchased in such trading centers as Norwalk.

On a certain day, Sergeant Keeler, who owned a cider mill, needed a wooden shovel. So he gave the following verse to a freighter for delivery to one Hezekiah, a maker of tools:

*Jeremiah to Hezekiah  
Asks if he will  
Make a shovel for his mill.  
Make it out of Butternut wood  
or something else that's just as good  
Finish it off as slick as ribb'n's  
And send it up by Hull or Stebbins.*

Just a short distance south of our Central High School, in front of the Purdy homestead, stands a large oak tree that is known to us all as Hangman's Oak.

The cattle thieves, whom the three men who captured Major André set out to find, were a great trial to our people of North Salem during Revolutionary days. Because these thieves stole cattle, they called themselves "cowboys." And people were in such constant fear of the cowboys' thievery that upon occasion they even hid their animals inside their homes or down in their cellars.

## NORTH SALEM IN THE REVOLUTION

One night Mr. Joseph Purdy called together a number of his neighbors to see what they could do about this bad situation. They decided to put out the lights and wait in



*Just as in Revolutionary days,  
Hangman's Oak is still to be seen  
by the roadside*

the Purdy living room, in case the thieves should come along. Soon they heard hoofbeats and two men appeared outside on horseback. Quickly the thieves dismounted and began to creep silently toward the barn.

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

Meanwhile, Mr. Purdy and his friends had stepped out from the house, moving as quietly as they could. Even so, the thieves heard them. One ran off toward Dean's Bridge into Somers. There he borrowed a pair of women's shoes, so the story goes, and waded into the stream. His pursuers thus lost track of him.

The other cowboy, who also ran off on foot, was captured and asked who his companion was. He would not tell. Mr. Purdy and the other men then took him into the living room of the Purdy home, where they lighted the lamp. They then saw that he was a man they knew, a Tory sympathizer. Again he was asked who his companion was. Again he refused to tell.

So they took him outside and, tying a rope around his neck, threw the other end over the limb of a large tree. Then they lifted the cowboy up from the ground, asking him the same question once more. He still would not answer them. Twice more they pulled him up, then let him down again. The fourth time he became unconscious. And several of the party overruled the suggestion that he be hanged. So he was let down once more. When his senses returned, he was told to leave North Salem and never come back. He obeyed, and was not seen in this locality again.

We are all very proud of the record of our North Salem patriots in the American Revolution.

## CHAPTER SIX

### *Our First North Salem Churches*

OUR OLDEST North Salem religious organization is the St. James Parish, which was organized in 1750 under the auspices of the society in England called the Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Fortunately for our North Salem history, the St. James records have been carefully kept, and it is from them that we have obtained the following facts.

On December 23, 1751, a grant of land was made for "the first minister who would be called and ordained in Salem." This deed of gift was signed by James Benedict, Timothy Keeler, and others, being part of ten thousand acres granted to them by King George II in 1731.

From the year 1731 to 1763, church services were held by itinerant missionaries in homes of members of the congregation. June 24, 1759, marks the date when the Rev.

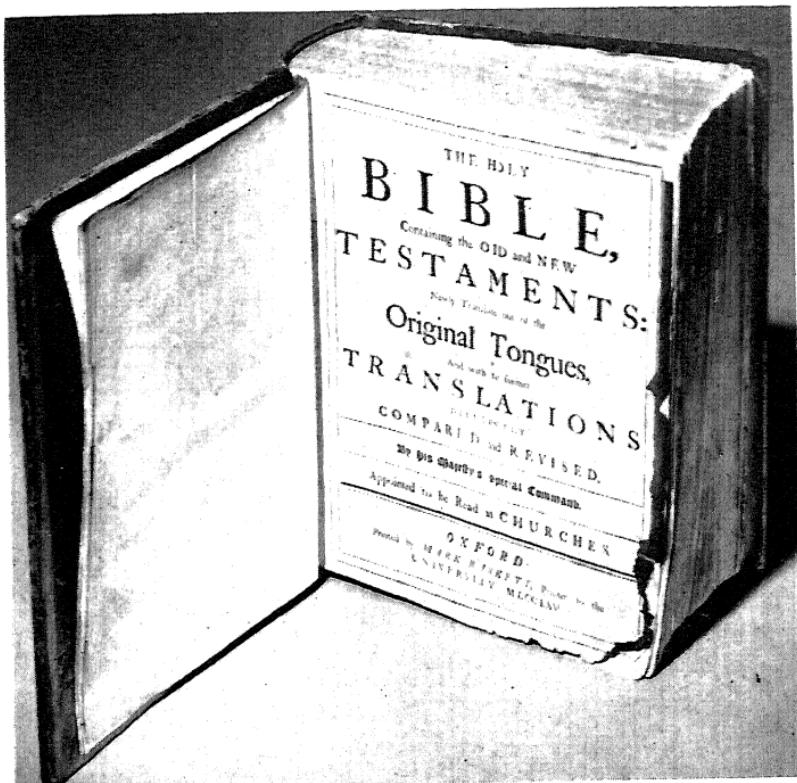
## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

Ebenezer Dibble became the first rector of St. James. The Rev. Dibble was born in Danbury in 1712. He was graduated from Yale in 1734, and in 1747 journeyed to England to receive his holy orders, returning to Stamford, Connecticut, as a missionary.

Under him, the congregation grew rapidly and with it the need for a church building. A letter written from Salem in 1761 to the Venerable Society said, "Measures to build a small church are being taken, as a private house will seldom contain the people who go to church." And in 1763, another letter to the Society says that the people of Salem "have built and almost covered a church." This first church building was erected on the border of the Van Cortlandt Manor just west of the present home of Mr. Sydney Gilbert. It was a fine building, thirty feet by forty feet, with glazed windows and galleries.

On May 29, 1768, the Rev. Ebenezer Dibble formally installed his successor, the Rev. Epenetus Townsend, as rector of the church. The Rev. Epenetus Townsend, a man still in his thirties, was a missionary rector who had a number of churches under his supervision in different places in this part of the country. He brought with him, as a gift from the Venerable Society to the Salem Congregation, the Bible and prayer book which are still in existence. Under him, the Salem congregation, as well as that of his other mission churches, continued to grow

## OUR FIRST NORTH SALEM CHURCHES



*This old Bible, brought to St. James Parish from England in 1757 by the Rev. Epenetus Townsend, is still cherished in our Town*

steadily. He had some difficulties, however, for in 1771, he wrote to the Society that "the Sabbath is by great numbers spent in riding, visiting, hunting, fishing, and such like diversions."

When trouble with England began, the Rev. Townsend remained loyal to the King, preaching against

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

rebellion. Because of his sermons and his beliefs, the Committee of Safety arrested him. He was imprisoned at Fishkill and was later sent to Long Island, which was then held by the British. He was finally allowed to sail for Nova Scotia, but on the way his ship was wrecked and he, his family, and all on board were lost.

In 1777, the Rev. Townsend wrote a letter to the Venerable Society which is a valuable historical document since it describes not only his activities at the outbreak of the Revolution, but his imprisonment and his trip to Long Island. Because of its value, we obtained a copy of this letter for our book. It is, of course, written from the point of view of a loyal Tory who had a very poor opinion of the "rebels," and may be much exaggerated. Part of its value as a record, however, lies in this very fact. It shows how a Tory looked at our loyal American colonists.

For a period during this time, St. James Church was closed and so fell into disrepair. After the Revolution, the people raised one thousand dollars by popular subscription and Trinity Parish of New York City contributed an equal amount to build a new church. The old church was torn down and even the nails, which were hand-forged, were sold at a public auction. The new church was built in 1810, dedicated, and services were held in it for many years. In 1871, it was replaced by the

## OUR FIRST NORTH SALEM CHURCHES

present edifice located between the villages of North Salem and Salem Center. The present community parish house, built over horse sheds, was erected almost entirely through the efforts of the late Mr. Charles E. Keeler, a former member of the Board of Education, and is used for the meetings of our North Salem Improvement Society.

The following is the letter written by the Rev. Epenetus Townsend in June 1777, to the secretary of the Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, in England. Showing as it does what a Tory, loyal to the King of England, felt about the rebellion of the colonists of this country, and especially those of Salem, "province of New York," it is a unique document.

REV. SIR:

From the first existence of the present rebellion I could give the Honorable Society no account of my conduct with respect to public affairs, because my distance from New York, and the excessive vigilance of the Rebel committees in getting and examining all letters, rendered such a step extremely dangerous. But being now, by God's good providence, banished from among the Rebels for my loyalty to his Majesty, I think it my duty to give the Honorable Society a short account of my conduct, from the beginning of these troubles, and of the treatment I have met with from the Rebels.

I did everything in my power, by preaching, reading the

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

Homilies against rebellion, and by conversation, to give my Parish and others a just idea of the sacred obligations laid upon us by Christianity, to be good and peaceful subjects, even if it had been our lot to have lived under wicked rulers, and much more so as Providence hath blest us with one of the wisest and best of Princes.

In May 1776, I was called before the Rebel Committee of Cortlandt's Manor, who invited me to join their association; upon which I told them freely that I esteemed their resistance of his Majestie's authority to be repugnant to the precepts of the Gospel, and therefore could not give it my countenance.

I continued the services of the Church for three Sundays after the Declaration of Independence by the Congress, and should have proceeded still, and took the consequences, but I was informed that all the clergy in this and neighboring Provinces has discontinued the public service till it might be performed under the protection of his Majesty.

On the 21st of October [1776], I was made a prisoner and sent to the Court of Fishkill, as an enemy to the Independence of America, where I was kept on parole through the winter, at my own expense, which was very great. The shocking insolence and inhumanity of the Rebels towards the friends of Government, of which I was a daily spectator, rendered the place of my imprisonment very disagreeable, and the cruel treatment which my family received from them in my absence was exceedingly distressing.

To this, as well as many other instances during my imprisonment, the good providence of God always found some method unforeseen by us, to support us under the

## OUR FIRST NORTH SALEM CHURCHES

greatest difficulties, and after He had thus continued us under the Rebel discipline for six months, He then granted us a happy deliverance; for, on the 31st of March [1777], in consequence of my refusing the oath of allegiance to the State of New York, I received an order to depart within eight days, with my family, apparel and household furniture, to some place in possession of the King's troops, in penalty of my being confined in close jail, and otherwise treated as an open enemy of the State. With this order I readily complied, and after procuring a flag from a Rebel General, to transport my family and furniture to Long Island, I set out. The Convention taking a genteel house, which my father had permitted me to build, sixty acres of land, which he had bought for me, with thirty acres of woodland, a horse, and a small stock of cattle, into their possession. At Norwalk [Connecticut], where I had procured a boat to cross the Sound, I was stopped four days; most of my furniture, after being put on board, was relanded, and all of it ransacked, under pretense of searching for letters, prohibited articles, etc., whereby many things were much damaged and others stolen. I was then obliged to pay the expenses of these abuses, which amounted to nine pound currency, and then was permitted to proceed.

On the 11th of April, we landed on Long Island, with hearts full of gratitude to God, for having at length delivered us from the malice and cruelty of the Rebels.

EPENETUS TOWNSEND

As one travels along Route 121, on the east side of the highway, one notices a quaint wooden building. This

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is the old Quaker Meetinghouse, which is one of the oldest of the buildings that are our North Salem historical landmarks, having been erected about 1765. To us, today, it is a symbol of the freedom of religion in our country, which is as much a part of our Town's history as the events of Revolutionary days.

At first, the members of the Society of Friends who lived in this section held their meetings in the homes of their members. Old records show that the homes of Samuel Field and David Palmer were among those used for this purpose. In 1763, it was felt by the members of the Society of Friends that a meetinghouse should be built. A location overlooking Peach Pond, as Peach Lake was then called, was decided upon and the quaint old building that still stands on the same spot was erected. It has one story and is thirty feet long and twenty feet wide. The land on which it is built was bought for three English pounds per acre, or about fifty-five dollars for the entire piece.

At the time that this meetinghouse was erected, there was a line of Quaker meetinghouses all the way from Long Island Sound to Quaker Hill in Putnam County. Mrs. William Ryder has a report from a yearly meeting of these societies held at Poughkeepsie:

"The original and only deed for the land at Peach Lake Meeting House has come to us as the joint property

## OUR FIRST NORTH SALEM CHURCHES



*The old Quaker Meeting House still stands as a symbol  
of our religious freedom*

of the two yearly meetings. A deed dated 1762 conveyed the property to Friends, and was long preserved by the Friends of the 20th St. Yearly Meeting, while the property appears to have been in the custody of the 15th St. Friends. The property may therefore well be considered as being owned in common by both yearly meetings and the interest shown in the large annual meeting held there is evidence of its value to all Friends."

The "two yearly meetings" mentioned in this report refer to the fact that there were two branches of the Society of Friends, both of which used the meetinghouse overlooking Peach Pond.

Mr. Edward Ryder, father of Dr. Ernest N. Ryder of

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

Croton Falls, conducted the last regular meetings of Friends' Society in this Town. However, gatherings in the Friends' Church are still held once a year, usually in August. At this time the descendants and friends of the Quakers meet to renew their faith and to see old acquaintances.

Record of another of our early churches is to be found in Scharf's *History of Westchester County*. This record says, "On a high range of ground in the eastern part of North Salem Town stood the 'Cat Ridge' Baptist Church, incorporated October 13, 1833. The following were trustees: Ebenezer Whelppy, Edward Ganong, John Wesley Searles, John Braden and James Mills. Members of this church later united with the Croton Falls Baptist Church." The Croton Falls Baptist Church is now part of the Federated Church.

Today, in the Town of North Salem, there are a number of religious organizations conducting regular services—the Roman Catholic with churches in the villages of Croton Falls and North Salem; the Episcopal, the Presbyterian, the Universalist, Baptist, and Methodist in the village of North Salem; the Federated Church in Croton Falls; the Methodist in Purdys.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### *North Salem's Post Roads and Railroads*

THE FAMOUS old New York and Vermont Post Road ran through the eastern part of our Town. Its course was about the same as the present Route 121. It entered North Salem from the south, passed east of Merryweather, the former Grant home, crossed Howe's Bridge, passed the Great Boulder, the Thaddeus Crane home, through the village of North Salem to the Quaker Meetinghouse. Here the Post Road turned right to Dingle Ridge Road and went on into Putnam County. The stopping places were Bailey's Tavern and Nichols' farm on Dingle Ridge. At the Benjamin Nichols' barn, the drivers would often change horses. The drivers used to change their horses every ten miles and one driver's boast was that he could change and harness his four horses in four minutes.

WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG



*This milestone on the old New York Post Road is a reminder of North Salem's stagecoach days*

In the northwestern part of the Town was the Boston to Hudson River Post Road. It entered Croton Falls by what is now Route 22 and extended to Somers by Route 118 and then went to Peekskill and the Hudson River. Near the Stone House Farm between Croton Falls and Somers is a milestone inscribed "16 miles to Peekskill."

In Somers is the Elephant Hotel, where stagecoaches known as the Eagle and Red Bird lines stopped. The son of Enoch Crosby owned and operated the Red Bird line between New York City and Albany. The fare was fourpence per mile from New York to Boston. Mr. Hachaliah Bailey, who built the Elephant Hotel, also had an interest in the stagecoach business. His grandson,

## POST ROADS AND RAILROADS

Mr. William Bailey, who now lives in the Bailey home-stead in Somers, tells us that when his father was a little boy he used to run excitedly out to the road and stop the stagecoaches.

Riding in a stagecoach was very unpleasant at times and usually there were from five to nine people in one coach, traveling at the rate of seven to ten miles per hour. The passengers often had small pigskin or deerskin trunks which were kept under their seats.

The passengers sometimes had to lean out of one side and then the other to prevent the coach from tipping over. Sometimes the ladies were thrust in through the open door with their bandboxes after them. The poet, Moore, describes a ride in a stagecoach as follows:

*Every bone is aching  
After the shaking  
I've had this week over ruts  
And ridges and bridges.*

Two of the old Post Road milestones, numbers 58 and 59, may still be seen by the Dingle Ridge roadside. Milestone 58 is the last in our Town. The boundary line between Putnam and Westchester Counties runs between the two milestones, 58 and 59. Few of the milestones have been carefully preserved except numbers 55 and 56, which were preserved by the Westchester Historical Society at the request of the North Salem Village Im-

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

provement Society. Number 55 is on the old roadbed of a trolley line that was once started to run from Goldens Bridge to Danbury, and number 56 is in North Salem village. The Westchester Historical Society protected them by building frames around them. The old milestones were erected about 1771 and the distances were measured from Federal Hall, now the Subtreasury Building in New York City.

The post roads, generally turnpikes, although the best at that time, cannot compare with our excellent roads today. In spring, the travel was hard because of mud, and in winter, there was the danger of snowdrifts and the travel was difficult and tiresome.

There were other means of transportation besides stagecoaches on the post roads. From earliest days, there was much horseback riding. Later, fine carriages were hitched to one horse or a team. Heavy wagons were drawn by oxen or horses.

Our North Salem Improvement Society has done a very fitting and appropriate thing in naming our highways of today after families who were prominent in the founding of our Town and in its later life—such as Baxter, Bloomer, Crosby, DeLancey, Grant, Hawley, June, Mills, Vail, and Wallace; Keeler, Howe, and Hunt Lanes; and Dingle Road.

Over one hundred years ago, the United States mail

## POST ROADS AND RAILROADS

was carried by stagecoach from Peekskill on the Hudson River to Ridgefield, Connecticut. The route extended through Yorktown, West Somers, Somers, Salem Center, and North Salem to Ridgefield. The trip was made twice a week each way.

Mr. George Cable of North Salem lent our class a very interesting document—a contract in which a distant relative of his agreed to carry the mail over this route. The following is an exact copy of the agreement:

North Salem, New York  
February 18, 1839

This agreement made between Benj. B. Gray of North Salem, Westchester County, State of New York, of the first part, and Charles Cable of the same place of the second part, that the said Cable agrees to carry the United States Mail from Peekskill by York Town, West Somers, Somers, Salem Center, North Salem to Ridgefield and back twice every week in a Pleasure Carriage agreeable to a contract made by said Gray with the Postmaster General. Beginning on the 18th day of February, 1839, and ending on the 30th day of June, 1841, subject to all regulations and alterations that the said Gray is to the Postmaster General, and the said Gray agrees to pay the said Cable, Sixty dollars per quarter of a year for the above labour.

DANIEL HUNT

*In presence of:*

BENJ. B. GRAY  
EPENETUS HOWE

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

We have also examined an old letter, dated April 25, 1846, which probably was delivered by Mr. Gray. It is interesting because instead of using an envelope, as we do today, the writer folded the paper, sealed it with wax, and wrote the address on one side of the writing paper. This was the general custom. Postage rates were estimated according to the mileage. The charge for mailing this old letter was ten cents from Petersburg, Virginia, to North Salem.

Each afternoon on the way home from school, on the left-hand side of the road, students of our Central High School see a big iron bridge, called Casey's Crossing. It was named after a Mr. Casey who lived there long ago. Shortly before and during the Revolutionary War, however, it went by the name of Dean's Bridge.

The Dean's Bridge Road was once the main east and west highway of our Town connecting Somerstown Plain, Purdys, and the Salems. It continued to be the main highway until some time after 1847, when another more direct road was started, to connect Purdys and Somers. It was not completed until after the Harlem Division of the New York Central Railroad was built.

This is the bridge over which, during the Revolution, the Tory horseman who had been stealing cattle escaped, and which General Tryon and his soldiers used for the same purpose after the burning of Danbury. Later, the

## POST ROADS AND RAILROADS

townspeople built a new wooden bridge here under the supervision of Hachaliah Brown at the cost of £100, which in our money would be about \$500.

Charles Wallace, a prominent farmer of this Town, once lived on the top of the hill near Dean's Bridge. Miss Julia Emerson of Somers tells us that in the summer Old Bet, the elephant, about whom we tell in our circus chapter, used to go to a pond along Dean's Bridge Road to drink and bathe.

Today we have little use for the present iron bridge except when people cross it in order to take a short cut to Somers village. The fields near Casey's Crossing were owned by the late Mr. A. J. Outhouse.

One very interesting field trip, which we made to various historic landmarks, included a visit to the ruins of the former dwelling of Charles Wallace. From there we went to the bridge itself and along Dean's Bridge Road to the spot where three old cellar excavations may still be seen. We also saw the small pond to which Miss Emerson had directed us, and where it is said Old Bet drank. We then continued on the State Road to Somers to view the statue of Old Bet and the Elephant Hotel. We returned to school by way of Route 116.

Before the Civil War, North Salem almost had a railroad built through the eastern part of our Town to connect Peach Lake, Danbury, and Goldens Bridge with

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

New York City. Many of our townspeople wanted this railroad, which would have helped them very much. But it was not completed because the farmers thought their cattle might wander onto the tracks and be killed, or their horses might become frightened and run away.

At the time this railroad was proposed, Mrs. William Ryder lived on a part of the land involved and was paid \$100 for a deed to the railroad company. When excavating in the swamp and grading it for the rails, one of the men found enormous bones which were thought to be the remains of mastodons. When rails were laid through the swamp, it was believed that one part of it was bottomless. For three weeks, stones were brought from Danbury to fill it in. This attempt was unsuccessful. The building of the railroad was abandoned, and later the land reverted to Mrs. Ryder. When Mr. Ryder then decided to drain the 20-acre swamp and got permission from New York State to do so, he soon found that it wasn't bottomless, after all.

In 1846-47, the present Harlem Division of the New York Central Railroad was extended northward to what is now the village of Croton Falls in North Salem. At one time, it had been proposed to build the railroad through Somers, making use of the flat turnpike through that village. But there was such vigorous protest from the farmers, who were afraid the smoke from the engines

## POST ROADS AND RAILROADS

would turn their sheep's wool black, that this plan was abandoned.

When the Harlem Division was extended to what is now Croton Falls, the grandfather of Mr. Stewart B. Butler of Croton Falls, Mr. Edwin Crosby, had the contract for the construction of the railroad's stone abutments near the iron bridge, this side of the present dynamo house near Croton Falls.

When the Harlem Division was first completed, there were only two trains from New York to Croton Falls daily. Mr. Ernest Secord of Croton Falls, who has a very interesting scrapbook of old railroad days and happenings, lent us a timetable of the Harlem Division, dated June 10, 1847. This timetable shows that trains arrived in Croton Falls from New York at 7 A.M. and 4 P.M. Stages for Lake Mahopac, Danbury, and Pawling met the trains. The fare from New York to Croton Falls was \$1.00. We were also interested in the following statements: "Up trains will leave the City Hall. The trains to and from Croton Falls will not stop on New York Island except at Broome Street and 32nd Street. A car will precede each train ten minutes to take up passengers in the city."

The rails of this first Harlem Division of the railroad were smaller than those of today. And wood was burned in the engines instead of coal. A resident of Croton Falls who loaded the wood on the trains was called Jimmy,



*Old Croton Falls, showing the first New York Central Railroad station there and the woodshed for the locomotives' wood*

the Wood. He was the great-grandfather of a former Seventh Grade student in our school.

The old photograph, reproduced above, is the property of Mr. Enoch Avery. It shows the old Croton Falls railroad station and near-by buildings, and has many items of interest to us today. The flagpole is on the site of the present drug store owned by Mr. Elbert C. Purdy. The small white building, left of the center, is the old law office of Mr. Odel Close. The white house in the foreground is the original Lee home, the first house erected in the village of Croton Falls. The long building at the left is the woodshed where wood was stored for locomotives, and where Jimmy, the Wood, worked.

## POST ROADS AND RAILROADS

An old clipping from a Brewster paper complains that there was no train service to that town. As years went by, the railroad was extended farther northward and we are all appreciative now of the convenience in traveling.

When the railroad first came through, the Rev. John Pierpont, one of our New York State poets and an ancestor of Mrs. Thomas Purdy, Jr., wrote the following, which we found in Pelletreau's *History of Putnam County*.

*We hear no more of the clanging hoof,  
And the stagecoach rolling by;  
For the steam-king rules the travelled world,  
And the old pike's left to die.*

*The grass creeps o'er the flinty path  
And the stealthy daisies steal,  
Where once the stage-horse, day by day,  
Lifted his iron heel.*

*No more the weary stager dreads  
The toil of the coming morn;  
No more the bustling landlord runs  
At the sound of the echoing horn.*

*For the dust lies still upon the road,  
And the bright-eyed children play  
Where once the clattering hoof and wheel  
Rattled along the way.*

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

During the years 1846 and 1847, when the Harlem Division of the New York Central Railroad was being constructed to what is now Croton Falls, a prosperous farmer named Mr. Isaac Hart Purdy lived in the old Purdy homestead, just a short way south of our school. His farm was the largest and the best in that community.

Mr. Purdy quickly realized the importance of the railroad to our Town, and offered to give the railroad company a certain amount of land if they would promise to build a depot and cattle yards on it, and have all trains stop there. The railroad company accepted his offer, and in his contract with them Mr. Purdy stipulated that, if the railroad ever stopped using the property for that purpose, it would revert to his heirs.

At the time the railroad was built, there were only three houses in the settlement. But after the railroad came through, more homes were erected, as well as factories and stores. In appreciation of Mr. Purdy's farsightedness, the village was named after him.

Years afterward, when the New York Water Supply planned the reservoirs, the land on which the village was built was condemned. Most of the houses and other buildings were then moved up on the hill. That is why the village of Purdys today is on a hill, southeast of its former location.

The spot where the village of Croton Falls now stands

## POST ROADS AND RAILROADS



*Purdys village on the New York Central Railroad, before it was moved up the hill when the Titicus Reservoir was constructed*

was a natural one for early settlement because of the water power furnished by the Croton River. Just when the first houses were erected here we do not know. But as we have seen, Mr. John Owens was one of the early mill owners of this locality and because of him the name of the settlement was Owenville. About the time that the railroad was completed in 1850, this name was changed to Croton Falls. The coming of the railroad gave Croton Falls much the same experience as Purdys. As soon as the railroad was completed, more houses were built, as well as factories and stores. Croton Falls also then had a newspaper, a copy of which Mr. Benjamin Clark lent us.

As late as 1900, a trolley line from Goldens Bridge to

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

Danbury was planned. The route was surveyed, the road-bed was graded, bridges built, some track was laid, and even the trolley wires were installed. It passed through the village of North Salem. At one time the work trains, pulled by steam engines, passed through the village streets. Then came a time of depression and trolley lines were not good investments, so this one was never finished. Many of our townspeople can remember how North Salem almost had a trolley line and can today show us gradings and excavations for it.



*All that remains of a bridge for the trolley line, never completed, which was to run between North Salem and Danbury*

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### *Early Farms and Industries in North Salem*

THE OUTSTANDING early occupation of our Town was farming and, with it, dairying. Scharf's *History of Westchester County* tells us that "by market-wagon twice a week, or once a fortnight by private families, butter, cheese, eggs, etc., were carried to the Hudson River, at Sing Sing or Peekskill, and from thence shipped by sloop to New York, while the fatted cattle found purchasers in the numerous drovers who passed through this vicinity." Mr. Stewart B. Butler recalls an old story of how the cattle were given lots of water to drink so that they would weigh more, and consequently bring in more money!

In time, milk became our most important product. When the railroad was put through, it was said that there were close to twenty-five hundred cows in North Salem.

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

Mr. Edwin Crosby, grandfather of Mr. Stewart B. Butler, was the first to ship milk to New York City by train from Croton Falls. At Purdys and Croton Falls, combined, the receipts of milk by the railroad rose to five thousand quarts a day, with the American—later, the New York—Condensed Milk factory at Purdys, founded by Mr. William H. Ireland Howe and of which Mr. Alfred B. Mead was later President, using six to ten thousand quarts a day. In addition, large milk producers in the northern part of our Town delivered milk to the Borden Condensed Milk Company at Brewster. Large quantities of butter and cheese were also produced. In the year 1860, thirty-eight tons of butter was our production record.

An interesting glimpse of how an early Dutch group in our general region helped each other with their farming has been given to us by Mrs. John T. Jeffery, daughter of the late Mr. Arthur J. Outhouse, former member of our Board of Education. The Outhouse family of our Town are among those whose Dutch ancestors were farmers of our State, and they have continued this agricultural tradition in North Salem.

Mrs. Jeffery wrote us, "The Outhouse family in North Salem and surrounding Towns traces its ancestry back to Holland. Under the original name of Stymus, several emigrated to the New World in the early seventeenth century and settled along the Hudson River in the vicin-

## EARLY FARMS AND INDUSTRIES



*This old picture of the mills of North Salem was taken before the coming of the reservoir, when the Titicus River was our industrial center and a most busy spot*

ity of the present village of Peekskill, as members of the Dutch patroon system. All members of this Dutch Sty-mus family were farmers, and since there were several of them, they adopted the community plan and established their homes in groups apart from the other Dutch settlers.

"Here they erected their small dwellings, dairy and grain barns. Because of the fact that these buildings were erected in groups by themselves and apart from those of the other Dutch settlers, they became known as 'outhouses.' Gradually the name of Stymus was changed to Outhouse, Oothouse, Althouse, or Othouse, by various branches of the family.

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

"Daniel Outhouse, grandfather of Arthur J. Outhouse, established a farm home northwest of Croton Falls in the section then known as Drewville, now covered by the waters of Hemlock Dam. Mr. Arthur Outhouse often told of working on the Drewville farm in his boyhood."



*The site of this old mill on the Titicus River is now covered by the reservoir of the New York City Water Supply*

Few people realize that manufacturing played an important part in our Town of North Salem a century and more ago. But such was the case, due largely to the Titicus and Croton rivers, whose flow was excellent for milling. Our earliest industrial development was along the Titicus River, which was the main source of our

## EARLY FARMS AND INDUSTRIES

early water supply. Following its course was a highway, connected by crossroads running north and south, and the old Post Road, now Route 118, was very convenient for taking products to the Hudson River markets.

The Titicus was a busy spot. Along its bank, from North Salem to Purdys, were mills for pressing apples, grinding grains, making paper, and sawing lumber. There were factories for making woolen goods, clothing, cheese, condensed milk, farm implements, and carriages.

Upholstery was also made for carriages, and the way in which this was done is very interesting. Whenever farm animals died, their tails and manes were cut off and twisted into rope. This rope was soaked in water and allowed to dry slowly, after which it was cut into small pieces and used for cushions in the carriages.

Near Salem Center were a brickyard and lime kiln. And an iron mine and forge was operated near North Salem. The iron was melted in furnaces and then pounded out with trip hammers.

Names of our early pioneers appear among these manufacturers. Miss Mary Rich tells us that Captain Lewis Rich, her ancestor who directed our Town Militia at the time of the Revolution, built a shop near the Wallace home for the making of hats. His partner was a Mr. Lockwood and the hats that they manufactured were shipped to New York City and to Providence, Rhode

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

Island. They employed about twenty men in the shop. The spot where these mills used to be is now a stretch of woods. Mr. Isaac Purdy owned a woolen mill here.

About the time of the Civil War and for many years afterward the Croton River furnished water power for turning the wheels of a number of shops and factories in Croton Falls and vicinity. A paper mill on the east bank near the Putnam County line was in operation for many years, as was later a brass and plumbing works and subsequently one of the Juengst machine shops. Remains of the river dam and shop foundations may still be seen near the bubbling spring on Route 22.

A short distance west of the present village of Croton Falls, on lands now owned by the Department of Water Supply of New York City, was located a tool factory manufacturing, at one time or another, steel wrenches, augers used in boring holes in wood, spoke shaves for shaping wooden spokes for wagon wheels, and faucets for molasses barrels. Here was also located a slate and toy factory. The slate stone was brought from Vermont, polished, shaped, and framed for school use. Mr. Frederick A. Purdy tells us that one day, when a huge grind-stone was in operation in the tool factory, it broke into small pieces which were sent crashing through the roof of the building.

Within the memory of older residents, a hat shop here

## EARLY FARMS AND INDUSTRIES



*In this old factory at Croton Falls, at various times, augers, slates, toys, and hats were made*

manufactured ladies' millinery and men's styles in soft hats and derbies. Grist and saw mills and the Whitlock Lumberyard were also included among the industrial plants of this part of the Town. Traces may still be seen of the foundation sites of the business enterprises mentioned above and of the millrace that brought water from Croton River to turn their machines.

Manufacturing declined when the Titicus and Croton rivers were taken by New York City for a water supply. Another cause for the decrease of the manufacturing industry, especially in the Salems, was the fact that the New York Central Railroad did not connect with these villages.

During the War of 1812, in his woolen mill on the

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

Titicus River between Purdys and Salem Center, Mr. Isaac Purdy made cloth for army uniforms. This spot is now covered by the Titicus Reservoir.

In addition, he made cloth for his other customers. This, Mr. Purdy would travel the countryside to sell. The bolts of cloth were carried in a large wooden wagon drawn by two horses. Shelves lined the inside of the wagon. Since Mr. Purdy was very busy with all this, he decided to hire his nephew, Isaac Quick, and send him to tour the western part of New York State.

At first Isaac was quite successful in his sales of cloth to the people along the shores of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. But then the war ended and hard times came. Sales stopped and he had little money. People were sympathetic but he couldn't live on sympathy. In desperation he wrote his uncle and started homeward with the wagonload of cloth.

Mr. Purdy, an able businessman, at once knew what to do. He started out on horseback to meet his nephew. They met outside Albany and you can well imagine the surprise of the nephew, who had heard nothing from his uncle in weeks. Then Mr. Purdy told Isaac about the plan he had. They would exchange the cloth for cattle. By the time they returned home to Purdys, they had turned defeat into victory, for they had three hundred cows and oxen. These were known as the "cloth cattle."

## EARLY FARMS AND INDUSTRIES

After that, the cloth was made for local use from wool purchased from the farmers of the township.

What was known as the Farmers' and Drovers' National Bank was the financial center for North Salem, Somers, and vicinity for over half a century. This bank was established in 1839 and was in Somerstown Plains, now Somers. It was located in a portion of the old Elephant Hotel, which had been built in 1824 from bricks that were made near by. Among the famous men who dined there were Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, Aaron Burr, Washington Irving, and Edwin Forrest, the great actor.

The Farmers' and Drovers' Bank was given that name because a great share of its business was with farmers



*This plant of the New York Condensed Milk Company, later bought by Borden, was the first of its kind in the State*

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

and drovers. Among the directors and depositors of the bank were many prominent people of North Salem.

Being on the direct route to city markets, Somers was an ideal place for a bank. When the drovers approached the town, a horseman, galloping ahead, would announce their arrival. The women at the Todd farm, where the drovers stayed, would hastily prepare a delicious feast in brick ovens for the hungry herdsmen. Often there were twenty or thirty of them who were glad to rest and clean up at the pleasant Todd home, just outside of the village. The animals, sometimes as many as a thousand or more, were also fed and pastured there.

There is an interesting story, connected with the Farmers' and Drovers' National Bank, about a country boy who found a large sum of money at the entrance to the bank. He quickly returned it to the cashier. The cashier was so impressed with the boy's integrity that he offered him a position in the bank. The boy advanced in his work and today is a trustworthy and highly respected official in a large Westchester bank.

Silas Finch, the grandfather of Mr. Albert Ward Chamberlain, who lives in Carmel, had a paper mill where the Juengst powerhouse now stands outside Croton Falls. On the opposite bank of the river was the office of Silas Finch's son, the Hon. George C. Finch, M.D. This latter building was torn down when the City

## EARLY FARMS AND INDUSTRIES



*This is the site of the old Plumbing Works and the first Juengst Shop on Croton River, Croton Falls*

of New York acquired the property. Dr. Finch was one of the founders of the County Courthouse in White Plains. In 1852, he represented the 1st Assembly District of Westchester in the State Legislature. Silas Finch built the colonial house on the hill across the road from the powerhouse.

In 1889, on the west side of what is now Route 22, near the bubbling spring by the roadside, a machine shop was established by Mr. George Juengst and his sons, Charles and George, Jr. After their father's death, his sons continued to manufacture machinery for many years.

Here in our Town, through the work of these men, were developed ideas which led to the manufacture of adding machines. Mr. Charles Juengst is credited with

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

inventing the cash register's basic features. And under the firm name of George Juengst and Sons were developed and manufactured gathering machines used in the gathering of pages, the stitching and the covering of books and periodicals. The first of these machines was completed for and bought by Frank A. Munsey in 1901. Others were used by Sears, Roebuck and Company, the New York Telephone Company, the United States Printing Office at Washington, D.C., the McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, and many others. Under their direction were also established in our Town dynamos for the generation of electricity.

The manufacturing interests of the Juengst family in our neighborhood go back to the days before the Civil War when Mr. George Juengst established a factory on the Muscoot River in the Town of Somers. Here he used the water power for turning machinery in the manufacture of sewing machines. In 1886, a company was formed and one hundred men were employed in the Empire sewing machine factory. As a result, a small community called Empireville sprang up around the factory.

Empireville was a busy community until the water supply was needed by the New York City water system. As a result, the Juengst manufacturing activities in Somers were discontinued. It was then that the Juengst factory outside Croton Falls was established.

## EARLY FARMS AND INDUSTRIES

Despite the many demands upon his time and energy, in his business career, Mr. George Juengst, Jr., took a keen and active interest in the affairs of our Town. For over half a century he was a member of our Board of Education, serving for a considerable period as President of the Board. He always took an active interest in school affairs, attending our basketball and baseball games whenever he could. He played a prominent role in making our Central High School the first centralized rural school in New York State.

In the hall of Central High School is a plaque with this inscription:

THIS TABLET IS A TRIBUTE TO  
GEORGE JUENGST, JR.

*As Member and President  
Of The Board Of Education  
Of This District For Over  
Half A Century*

*In Recognition Of  
His Untiring Efforts And  
Devoted Service In Behalf Of  
The Youth Of This Community  
From 1888 to 1939*

*Erected By The District*

*June 1940*

## CHAPTER NINE

### *The Development of North Salem's Schools*

THE FIRST RECORD we have of the erecting of a special building for a schoolhouse in our Town is dated 1784, and tells of one built on the lands of Abraham Knox, William Bloomer, and Gersham Hanford near Peach Lake. This was one of a number of small, unimproved one-room country schools that preceded our present fine Central Rural Public School System.

However, in our Town's early days, we did have a famous and progressive private academy, which in point of time was the second school to be built in our Town—in the year 1787. The original record book of the North Salem Academy, bearing the dates 1787–1853, is one of the valued manuscripts of the Westchester County Historical Society, and it is from the Society's Bulletin that

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR SCHOOLS

we obtained the information given here about the Academy.

The Academy building, which is our present Town Hall in Salem Center, was built in 1773 by Stephen DeLancey as a private residence, but it was never occupied by him. After its use during the Revolution as a jail and courthouse for the trial of Tories, it was later purchased in 1786 for a State academy. It was incorporated in 1790, being the first incorporated academy in Westchester County and the third in the State of New York.

After having secured a designated place for a school, the Trustees' next thought was for the preservation of



*The old North Salem Academy, now our Town Hall, was the most prominent school in the Town of North Salem in the early school system, after the Revolution*

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG



*The old Guinea School, now a residence outside Croton Falls, is a dramatic contrast to our modern Central High School*

the building, and the laws laid down for the conduct of the students seem quite strict to us of today. At the first meeting of the Trustees in October 1787, it was agreed that "Mr. Amzi Lewis be employed to take charge if he can be obtained and that we will ensure him for his services One hundred pounds for one year and find House room for him and his family to live in the Academy. And what the tuition amounts to the sd. year above one hundred pounds is to be for the advantage of the sd. Instructor. He is also to have room for a good garden."

At this meeting, a committee was also appointed to see that "the sd. Academy be cleaned and got in order as quick as conveniently can be." The members of this committee were Uriah Wallace, John Delavan, and Ebenezer Purdy.

The Rev. Amzi Lewis accepted the offer and so be-

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR SCHOOLS

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*Our Central High School north of Purdys is honored in being  
New York State's first central rural school*

came the first principal of the North Salem Academy in charge of the eighty students who attended it in 1787. The Rev. Lewis with his family and the boarding students occupied the first floor, and the second was used for classrooms and for study. Other students boarded with near-by families at the rate of \$1.25 a week.

There were four terms of a total of forty-four weeks in the school year, and the tuition ranged from \$2.75 to \$8.75 a term, according to the course of study pursued. There were three courses of study—the English Department, the Teachers' Department, and the Higher Branches. Both young women and young men attended the Academy and the attendance was greater during the winter months, undoubtedly due to the fact that during this part of the year many of the young people did not have to work on the surrounding farms.

The administrative body of the Academy continued

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

to be a Board of Trustees. Among the members on the board were Ebenezer Purdy, Isaac Keeler, Gilbert Hunt, Benjamin Close, Epenetus Wallace, Benjamin Haight, Jesse Truesdale, Thaddeus Crane, Jonathan G. Tompkins, Hachaliah Brown, Philip Van Cortlandt, Patriot Ebenezer Lobdell, John Quick, and many others. Jonathan G. Tompkins later served on the New York State Board of Regents.

Included among the laws and regulations which these Trustees drew up were the following. "It is expected that all the students who attend this Academy will be Gentlemen, and as such will behave with decency and respect to the Principal and other Instructors employed by the Trustees to have the care and oversight of the Academy.

"It is expected that there be no rude or uncivil or noisy exercise, or amusement parties within the Academy: such as wrestling, scuffling, jumping, hopping or anything that may have a tendency to injure the Building or its Furniture, or unnecessarily disturb or interrupt any fellow student when pursuing his studies. And if any Student shall offend in any of the aforesaid particulars, for the first offense he shall be privately Admonished and fined according to the nature of the offense; for the second, he shall be publicly Admonished and fined; for the third, he shall be liable to be expelled."

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR SCHOOLS

If a student over twelve years of age was absent from school without permission, he was fined one shilling for the first offense and for every day's absence for five successive days one shilling per day. Every student was expected to attend religious services on Sunday. If absent, he was fined a shilling. If a student were guilty of swearing, intoxication, or falsehood, he was also fined. And if he struck another student, he was punished at the discretion of the Executive Authority of the Academy.

Many young men who later became prominent citizens of the United States attended the North Salem Academy. Among them was Daniel D. Tompkins, who was Governor of New York State between 1807 and 1817 and Vice-President of our country under President Monroe. Descendants of Mr. Tompkins now live in Somers. The father of Mr. D. Irving Mead was another of the Academy students, preparing for college there and entering Yale in 1849. Darius Ogden Mills also attended the Academy.

Since the Academy had a truly religious atmosphere, many of the principals following the Rev. Lewis were ministers, and also many of the teachers. The Rev. McNiece, an Irish patriot and Presbyterian preacher, became principal after the Revolution. An old catalogue of the Academy shows that Dr. John Jenkins presided over the school in 1846-47. This is of special interest to

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

the residents of North Salem because he was the grandfather of the late Mr. A. J. Lobdell, a former Supervisor of our Town, and great-grandfather of Miss Cornelia Lobdell, Louise, Jenny, Whitney, Paul, and Albert, Jr., who lost his life in World War I.

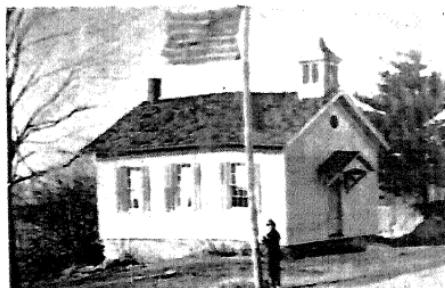
The Academy was so well known and of such high standing that support was given to it by people who lived in other sections of the State. Among the names of these recorded supporters are those of "Mr. Jay" and "Mr. Hamilton."

According to information given to us by a former student of the Academy, it was discontinued as a school sometime between 1895 and 1900, when it was then transferred to the Town of North Salem to be occupied as a Town Hall and has been used as such ever since.

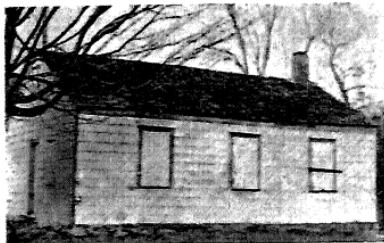
In the year 1825, five more schools were built in our Town. Later, North Salem was divided into seven school districts, in each of which there were approximately twenty-five pupils. These schools were known as Bogtown, Pine Tree, Dingle Ridge, North Salem, Salem Center, Purdys, and Guinea.

In these early days of our school system, there was no law compelling children to attend school—except the parents' law. Mrs. Malcolm Lucas tells how her grandfather, Mr. Francis Bloomer, when a young lad, would sometimes sit on the fence in the morning debating

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR SCHOOLS



*The old Pine Tree school is now a residence on Star Ridge Road*



*The old Bogtown school stood on Bogtown Road, south of the Titicus Reservoir*



*The residence of Louis Ettlinger became the Croton Falls school, now Masse Inn*



*The old North Salem school, now gone, was near the old Bailey Tavern*



*This old school in Salem Center is now a residence on our Route 116*

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

whether to attend the Pine Tree School or the Dingle Ridge School. Pine Tree was nearer but more of his pals attended Dingle and he had better times there. Under such circumstances, we can well imagine which school he attended!

Mrs. William Ryder, who was interviewed by a Seventh Grade class committee, gave us some interesting facts about these plainly built, early one-room schools in the Town of North Salem. Around three sides of the room there were sloping planks, painted blue, which served as desks for the children. For seats, the pupils sat on narrow benches without backs, facing the wall. When the children became tired from sitting in this position, they turned around on the bench and faced the teacher. In the center of the room was a wood stove and the fire wasn't started until the teacher arrived. In the part of the room away from the stove, it was always too cold; while in the part near the stove, it was too hot. Oftentimes, in the morning, the children stood outside shivering while waiting for the teacher to arrive. A pail, filled with water and containing a dipper from which all the children drank, stood on a bench in the entryway. The lighting and the heating were poor. One of the school boys or the teacher acted as janitor.

The course of study was limited in these olden days. At first, just the three R's were taught—"Reading,

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR SCHOOLS



*The old Dingle Ridge school, now gone, was on the route of the original New York Post Road*

'Riting, 'Rithmetic." As time went on, other subjects were added. Textbooks were few indeed, but Mrs. Ryder said she acquired an excellent education, nevertheless. The children often had to walk several miles to school each day.

Between the years 1903 and 1914, there were only six school districts in the Town of North Salem because the Bogtown district had been dissolved. In 1914, four of the six districts were consolidated.

Our present elementary school building in North Salem village was erected in 1916 and remodeled in 1925. It is an attractive, modern structure. Before the time when all our Town's schools were centralized, this North

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

Salem village school combined three school districts. Until the years 1925 and 1926, there were eight grades in this school. At that time, two years of high school were added. Through the generosity of Miss Cornelia Storrs, a fund was then established for special Home Economics courses for girls. When our Central High School was erected, this Home Economics Department was transferred there, together with the high school courses of study. Today, our North Salem village school has the first six grades with three teachers in charge. The headquarters of our North Salem Public Library are also in this building, with a special section for the school boys and girls.

In Croton Falls, just east of Route 22, on Harvey Birch Hill, stands a modern brick building which is our second Town of North Salem elementary school. This school has six grades which are in charge of four teachers. The North Salem Public Library has a branch here for the school boys and girls, the branch for our older Croton Falls citizens being in the center of the village business section.

Before the present school building was erected on Harvey Birch Hill, the old Louis Ettlinger home, now Masse Inn, was the schoolhouse in this part of Town. Until 1926, there were eight grades in this school.

In 1925, an event took place which was of great im-

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR SCHOOLS

portance to us all. We became part of the first centralized rural school district in New York State. That is why ours is known as "Central School District No. 1." And our Central High School, started in 1925 and completed in 1927, has the distinction of being the first centralized rural school building in the State.

Our good old Central High School, a big red brick building, stands high on a beautiful site, above Route 22. On the front lawn is a flagpole from which Old Glory will always wave. The school building, which consists of thirty-five rooms, cost \$300,000.

Our school has students from the former rural districts which were the educational centers of our Town for seventy-five years. Before 1919, only a half-dozen pupils attended high school from five of the districts. A central school has so many advantages that one-room schools are no longer justified. Central High School has a Junior High School department as well as a Senior High School department, with a principal and ten teachers in charge. The North Salem Public Library also sends books to our school library. Since 1930, Central High School has had over two hundred graduates. Many of them are now attending or have been graduated from colleges or other institutions of higher learning. Over one hundred former Central students are now in the Armed Forces of our country, and two have made the supreme sacrifice.

## CHAPTER TEN

### *Our North Salem Circus*

EVERY HISTORY of the American circus mentions our North Salem circus, which was one of the first to go out on tour in the United States. It was owned and operated by Messrs. June, Titus, Angevine and Company. The "Company" included many citizens of our Town who bought stock and so had a share in it. During the summer, it traveled great distances and in the winter the animals were distributed among the owners for safe-keeping. One winter, the monkeys were assigned to Mr. Amzi Close, grandfather of the late Charles Close, who lived in Salem Center. Before his death, Mr. Charles Close used to tell us about how, as a boy, he would leave home early in the morning so that he could go past his grandfather's homestead on the way to school and make a visit to the monkeys in their winter home in the

## OUR NORTH SALEM CIRCUS

basement. He also had a very amusing story about these monkeys which we shall tell later in this chapter.

It is said that June, Angevine, Titus and Company were the first circus people to bring a hippopotamus to this country, and that their circus always had an unusual number of elephants. In all probability, the idea for organizing our North Salem circus came to them because of the success of one of our early Somers neighbors, Hachaliah Bailey, who exhibited his famous elephant, Old Bet.

A class committee of the Seventh Grade interviewed Mr. William Bailey of Somers, grandson of Hachaliah Bailey. He has in his possession a collection of old circus posters, passes, and receipts. For our school museum, he



*This beautiful old residence was built by Mr. June of the circus firm, June, Angevine, Titus and Company*

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

presented us with a small book printed by June, Titus, Angevine and Company, which shows the States toured by our North Salem circus in the year 1842. Mr. Bailey also told us that, for some unknown reason, other circus people called the June, Titus and Angevine firm the "flatfoots."

The 1842 tour of our North Salem circus company—"Menagerie and Circus" as it is called in the book given us by Mr. Bailey—started at Cincinnati, Ohio, on April 1, 1842, and ended in New York City on October 22 of that same year. It was under the direction of Mr. Lewis B. Lent and the following are listed as the principal members: "Equestrians—J. R. Shay, Director, Master W. Wymar, H. E. Conover, H. A. Gardner, Moses Lipman, J. McCloud, H. W. Ruggles, Charles Sands, R. Sliter, I. Sweet, R. White. The clown was Sam Lathrop. The assistant manager was Thomas Field; the Farrier, A. Hunt; the Leader of the Band, E. K. Eaton; the Canvas Director, J. C. A. Hobby; the Animal Keeper, W. A. Van Amburgh; the Giraffe Keeper, C. J. Howe; the Elephant Keeper, W. Perrin."

The States included in this tour were Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and New York. Going along the roads in circus wagons pulled by horses, they traveled 2,482 miles and were out 184 days, of which 151 were spent in actual traveling, making an av-

## OUR NORTH SALEM CIRCUS

erage of 16 miles for each day's drive. They exhibited in 85 towns and cities.

In order to perform in any community, the managers had to obtain a license. And in addition to the circus staff, local policemen were always employed, Mr. Bailey told us, to help maintain order.

On one of Mr. Bailey's posters, we found the following:

Doors open at  $7\frac{1}{2}$  o'clock  
Box admissions 75¢  
Gallery 50¢  
Stand up for a shilling  
Sit down for two

Receipts showed the cost of advertising our circus eleven times daily through one season to be \$9.62½. Musicians received \$35 per month, but part of their salary was held back and paid at the end of the season.

Another North Salem resident whose name is prominent in American circus history was Aaron Turner, who had a farm near the present village of North Salem. When he was a shoemaker in Ridgebury, Connecticut, Mr. Turner decided to give up his shoemaking and organize a road show in the exhibition business. He had three grown children, two sons and a daughter, all of whom were good horseback riders and acrobats, and they went along as performers. It is interesting that it

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

was Aaron Turner's road show which P. T. Barnum joined when he started his circus career.

Mr. George Bailey, a nephew of Hachaliah Bailey, married Aaron Turner's daughter. This is the Mr. Bailey who was the proprietor of Bailey's Tavern that was such a center in the village of North Salem and it was natural that he should decide to have a circus of his own, with all the circus talk that must have gone on in his tavern.

One story goes that, when his red and gold wagons were no longer fit to take out on the road, he drove his musicians around in a box wagon. One day in Washington, D.C., everyone at the White House was amazed to see our North Salem circus promoter and his box wagon filled with musicians. Andrew Jackson, who was then President, is said to have expressed his gratitude that these North Salem people came to entertain him. Another story says that during the Civil War one of our North Salem troupes went along the Mississippi River to entertain the soldiers.

Many of our North Salem homes still have circus relics in their attics. Mrs. Frederick T. Nelson showed us a circus drum which is now owned by Miss Margaret DeVeau, and an old receipt showing that someone paid \$5,000 for half interest in certain circus animals. One amusing local story is about the inquisitive boys who once explored an old barn on a hill across from the Great

## OUR NORTH SALEM CIRCUS

Boulder. When they peeked into a large case stored there, they had the fright of their lives at discovering what looked like human bodies. These were wax figures which had once been used in circus exhibits.

Several of the homes once owned by the members of our North Salem circus company may still be seen. On June Road, across from the Raymond estate and north of Mr. Benjamin Van Scoy's, is the beautiful old residence in which the June family once lived. The Gifford Cochran home was that of the Titus family. And on Pequenakonck Road, once called "Hardscrabble" because of its steep hill, is the old home of Mr. Angevine, now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Albert B. Tibbets.



*The lively circus monkeys spent the winter in the cellar of the old Close homestead*

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

Circus reminiscences, given to us by the descendants of old North Salem families, include the story about the elephant that was buried in Lake Waccabuc. It is said a certain lady of our Town would never eat fish caught in the lake, after that! Walter Heady, one of our Central High School students, tells us that his grandfather used to take some of the elephants belonging to the North Salem circus to Peach Lake to drink. And another story about one of our circus elephants concerns the time when he became lame and could not travel along the roads. His ingenious owner promptly put him on a canal boat and exhibited him at the towns along the Erie Canal!

During the winter, to save expense, circus wagons were put in the barn of Mr. Amzi Close to be painted. Mr. Charles Close had the marble slab on which the paints were mixed and showed it to us.

One winter, as we have said, Mr. Amzi Close was asked to take care of the monkeys which were a part of the circus. Knowing how mischievous monkeys are, Mr. Close was hesitant but finally consented and put them in his basement. One large monkey, who was quite vicious, was tied to a pillar but the others were allowed to go around freely.

On a certain Sunday, the Close family invited the Presbyterian minister to dinner. Just when the preacher started to say grace, they heard a screeching noise. Mr.

## OUR NORTH SALEM CIRCUS

and Mrs. Close with the minister rushed down to the basement and found that the monkeys had fallen into a tub of soft soap. In those days it was common for families to make their soap instead of buying it. The monkeys didn't like their soap bath very much, so Mr. Close asked the parson if it would be breaking the Sabbath to rescue them. After deep meditation, the parson decided in the monkeys' favor. While the minister was watching the bathing of the monkeys, the vicious monkey grabbed his coattail and tore it off. Again the parson had to be consulted for advice. Would it be wicked to mend it on Sunday? Again the Sabbath had to be broken. Mrs. Close mended the coat so the parson could preach his sermon in the afternoon as usual.

Mr. Charles Close resided until the time of his death in this same house. He had gathered a rare collection of Indian relics, books, and pictures of interesting events connected with local history. Mr. Close was always glad to show his collection and to share his information with his many friends, including our school's students. The cross-road where the Close homestead still stands has been named "Close's Corner."

In the year 1808, the people of Somers were surprised to see a man walking up and down the road leading an elephant. They looked with amazement a second time, because they never thought an elephant would come to

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

their community! It seems that Mr. Hachaliah Bailey, a prominent resident of Somers, had secured from a relative of his an elephant from Africa. One local legend says that Mr. Bailey's plan was to use the elephant, whom he named Old Bet, for use in plowing and other heavy work; but she ate so much that this was found impractical. However, since so many people came to see her, Mr. Bailey put her under cover and charged admission.

After all the people around Somers had seen her, Mr. Bailey took her to other places including the Town of North Salem. Old Bet often traveled at night so that people would be unable to see her until they paid admission, next day. When she was put on exhibition in the daytime, a hand organ was also used as a part of the show. The hand organ was later owned by a resident of North Salem.

Mr. Stewart B. Butler recalls an amusing prank which some North Salem boys played one night on the men who were taking Old Bet to her next show place. It seems that Old Bet liked potatoes. So her drivers always took some along, and when she became sleepy, all they needed to do to keep her going was to drop potatoes on the road in the direction they wished her to go.

The North Salem boys knew this, and made careful preparations on this particular night. First, they made a huge pile of brush, all ready for a bonfire. Then they

## OUR NORTH SALEM CIRCUS

laid a line of potatoes from the main road, where they knew Old Bet was coming, to the brush pile. Sure enough, as soon as Old Bet smelled the potatoes, she



*Today Old Bet looks down on the  
scene of her former fame*

turned into the field. Then the boys quickly lighted their bonfire and shouted with glee, for they were seeing Old Bet without paying admission!

When Old Bet died, her owner had a monument erected in her memory. The monument consists of a

WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG



*Hachaliah Bailey of circus fame built this famous elephant Hotel, long a social center of our neighborhood and headquarters of the old Farmers' and Drovers' bank*

granite shaft fifteen feet high on the top of which is a miniature elephant. It still stands in front of the Elephant Hotel in Somers. Mr. William Bailey of Somers has in his possession a receipt dated 1809 in which Hachaliah Bailey acknowledged granting a half interest in Old Bet to another showman by the name of Benjamin Lent. After Hachaliah Bailey died, a young man named McGinnis took his name and teamed up with P. T. Barnum.

When we visited Mr. William Bailey, he presented us with copies of the old transactions on the next page.

## OUR NORTH SALEM CIRCUS

Articles of agreement between Hachaliah Baily of the first part and Andrew Brown & Benjamin Lent of the second part.

The S. Brown & Lent agree to pay to S.-Baily twelve hundred dollars each for the equal two thirds of the use of the Elephant for one year from the first day of this month. Baily on his part furnishes one third of the expenses and Brown and Lent the other two thirds

August 13th 1808—

Know all men by these presents that we Cyrus A. Cady & John E. Rupell for and in consideration of one Thousand Dollars to us in hand paid by Benjamin Lent have sold Nero the Royal Tiger & Cage to him the said Benjamin Lent  
*New York December 9th 1809*

CYRUS A. CADY      JOHN E. RUPELL

I hereby certify that I have this day Hired to Benjamin Lent the one fourth part of the use or Earnings of a certain Beast or Animal called an Elephant, for and during the term of Eleven Months commencing the fifteenth day of August last—for the use or hire of which I acknowledge to have received full satisfaction, by the purchase of one half of an animal called the Royal Tiger (of said Lent) & in case said Elephant should die within said term, I agree to allow said Lent at the rate of five hundred Dollars a Year for whatever part of said Eleven Months may remain unexpired. Witness my hand & Seal—13 December 1809

*Witnesses Present:*      HACHALIAH BAILY

JOHN OWEN BAILEY BROWN

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### *Two Quaint Characters in North Salem*

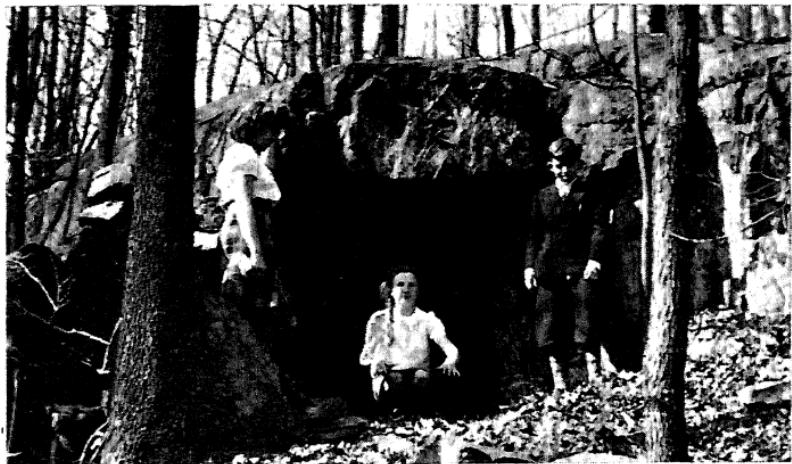
DURING THE Revolutionary War, a new inhabitant arrived in North Salem—a strange and mysterious woman named Sarah Bishop. She came here from Long Island, and various reasons are given why she appeared in this community. One of them is that she had a lover at sea who lost his life, and she was too lonely in her old home. Another is that she loved her home on Long Island so much that after she was driven away from it by the British, she selected a cave on West Mountain where she could get a good view of her home and the place where she had once lived. It was near this cave that our first settlement in North Salem was situated.

In 1804, a man by the name of Samuel Goodrich visited her and when he wrote his autobiography, *Recollections of a Lifetime*, he included her story in it. In this

## TWO QUAINT CHARACTERS

story he relates that the bare and desolate rocks were actually Sarah Bishop's home. The cave where the hermitess lived was three feet wide and four feet high. Mr. Goodrich also states that the hermitess trained the birds and animals around her. For food she had vegetables from a garden on top of the cave. In this garden were peach trees, potatoes, and cucumbers. A few of her close friends also gave her food.

On Sundays she would leave her cave and go to a friend's house where she kept a few silk dresses. These she would exchange for her old clothes and go to church. On her return she would change back again and return to her cave. Mr. Goodrich said that one time, while he



*This picture of the cave that was the home of our North Salem hermitess was taken on the occasion of a class historical trip made by members of our Seventh Grade and our principal*

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

was dining at his home, Sarah came to call on him. He asked her if she would join him for the meal, but she preferred to eat alone.

One dark wintry night in 1810, when she was returning to the cave where she had spent thirty years, she stumbled on a rock and fell. She was too weak to continue her journey and died during the night. Mr. Joseph Knapp, who was walking near the cave the next morning, found her body under some grapevines. The land where Sarah Bishop's cave is located is a short distance east of the Keeler homestead in North Salem, and Seventh Grade committees have visited it. The story of Sarah Bishop will remain with the inhabitants of our Town as a picturesque local legend. She was buried in the Episcopal Cemetery at North Salem.

Between the years of 1860 and 1889, many people in the Town of North Salem were accustomed to having a man clothed in leather appear at their door. To many children, this "Leather Man," as he was commonly called, was known as a bad man who would hurt them if they were naughty. To others, he was a harmless beggar. In reality, the Leather Man did not consider himself a beggar at all as he had several caves and huts which were his "residences." At night, he would go to the nearest one for his rest. His caves were always in the best of condition. His bed was made of evergreen boughs and dried

## TWO QUAIN'T CHARACTERS

leaves which were held in place with chestnut rails. The Leather Man's cooking utensils consisted of a few tin cans which were washed and turned over on pegs to dry after use.

The Leather Man dressed in a peculiar manner. His suit of clothes consisted of a jacket extending to his knees, pantaloons that he pulled up high, and shoes with soles two inches thick. The outfit was made from small pieces of leather, sewed or tied together. The suit weighed about sixty pounds and the shoes weighed ten pounds. Probably this accounted for the slow manner in which he walked. Another peculiarity was that if he were supplied with enough food or tobacco, at any time, the Leather Man would not accept more. Once when Mr. Charles Close offered him tobacco, he refused. Mr. Close again asked him if he would not accept his offer. At this the Leather Man spat out some tobacco to show Mr. Close that he was already supplied.

Mr. Christopher M. Monahan of Croton Falls relates the following. "The Leather Man often stopped at my uncle's home in South Salem, where he usually accepted a hearty meal of meat, potatoes, vegetables, and pie—all of which he ate from one bowl."

Mrs. Carrie Paddock says of him, "I remember the old Leather Man well. He was tall and stout and carried a tin pail which was as black as coal on the outside.

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When he went down to the brook to get water to drink, he would never talk to anyone." Mr. Enoch Avery of Croton Falls tells us that the old fellow in response to "Good morning," would return the greeting with an expression that sounded like "Good Morrison."



*This picture of the old Leather Man is from the collection of the Westchester Historical Society*

When given boots, he would cut the tops off and put them into the bag which he carried with him on his journeys around the countryside. The pieces of leather

## TWO QUAIN'T CHARACTERS

were later used to repair his suit. The Leather Man accepted food as well as tobacco and leather. Most of the people who were hospitable enough to feed him kept separate dishes for his use only. He would usually arrive on schedule at a house where he knew he could get a full meal. The family feeding him could tell beforehand about when he would arrive. On one occasion the Leather Man changed his route because the men working on the aqueduct ridiculed him. He never went over that way again.

Once a boy discovered one of the Leather Man's caves and, finding a supply of wood, built a fire there. When he told his mother, she made him take back wood from their own pile so that the Leather Man would find plenty ready upon his next visit. If, as was sometimes the case, one of his caves was disturbed by intruders, he never inhabited it again, but preferred to select a new site near by.

While he was often teased, he never harmed anyone. Once a teacher of a village school allowed her pupils to leave their seats and stand at the window to watch him pass by. At another time, school children during their recess period shared their lunches with him.

In his later years the Leather Man was not well. His visits became more and more irregular and finally, on March 24, 1889, he was found dead, lying face down,

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

on the floor of a hut on the Dell estate in Briarcliff. He was discovered by a Mr. Henry Miller and his wife. The authorities did not find the Leather Man's bag and it is believed that, due to the condition of his poor health, he was unable to carry it with him. Owing to his sudden death, it was thought that the Leather Man might have been a victim of foul play in that it was rumored that he had become heir to a large inheritance. But it was later proved that he died a natural death.

The origin of the Leather Man is unknown. He had apparently had some education, for he seemed to be an intelligent man. It is believed that he came from France after a disappointing love affair. The story goes that in France he was promised that if he made good in the leather business he could marry the daughter, Marie, of a leather merchant by the name of Laron, for whom he worked. About that time the leather business crashed and with it all hope of marriage. Sorely grieved, Jules Bourglay, which supposedly was his name, came to America to begin a new life.

This story of his life in France is only legendary, however. But wherever he came from or whoever he might have been, the Leather Man will long be remembered by the older residents of the Town of North Salem who knew him when they were children.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### *North Salem Men of Achievement*

TO TELL about all the eminent North Salem people of other days of whom we are proud would fill a whole book and a much larger one than this. The men whose stories you find in this chapter we chose because they represent different kinds of achievement in the life of our country: a banker, a journalist, a businessman, an artist, and an educator who was also an archaeologist. The ways in which they got their education and in which they made the most of their opportunities show what our country has always offered ambitious young people. In this chapter we have also included an account of the happy days spent by a former President of the United States in the North Salem home of his son and daughter-in-law.

One of our most famous North Salem citizens was

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

Darius Ogden Mills. James Mills, his father, was an outstanding resident of our Town for many years, serving in 1835 as Town Supervisor. His home still stands, south of our Town Hall. Mills Road, named in honor of Darius Ogden Mills, is on the south side of the Titicus Reservoir. Darius Ogden Mills, who was to become a foremost citizen of the United States, was born in the year 1825. Young Ogden, as Darius was familiarly known, attended the North Salem Academy and, later, the Mt. Pleasant Academy. When he was sixteen, his father died and from that time on Darius Ogden Mills made his own way in the world.

First, he secured a clerkship in New York City. Then he went to Buffalo, where he became cashier and partner in the Merchants' Bank of Erie County. At this time, he was twenty-two and eagerly learned everything he could about banking.

In the summer of 1848, gold was discovered in California. Shortly afterward his brothers, James and Edgar, set off around Cape Horn. Ogden did not approve of their plan. But as more and more news of the large amounts of gold that were being acquired were circulated, Ogden decided to follow suit.

In December 1848, with two companions, he sailed south to the Isthmus of Panama. There wasn't any canal then, so they had to cross the Isthmus by foot and by

NORTH SALEM MEN OF ACHIEVEMENT



*The old Mills homestead, where Darius Ogden Mills spent his boyhood, may still be seen in Salem Center*

mule. On the other side of the Isthmus, Ogden had planned to get aboard the new ship, *California*. Unfortunately, about three thousand others had the same idea. However, he finally managed to get to California.

Young Ogden looked around him. He saw the many disappointments there were in digging gold. So he decided to do something else instead. He obtained a stock of merchandise that people needed and planned to sell it. This he did, first in Stockton, then in Sacramento. He exchanged food and other supplies for gold dust and so got his gold without prospecting for it. When he went back to Buffalo, he had a net profit of \$40,000.

In the spring of 1850, he returned to California and

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sent another shipload of supplies to California around Cape Horn. He was successful in this merchandising venture, too. Next, he organized a bank. This bank, known as the D. O. Mills and Company Bank, became a financial center of the State.

Seven years later, his doctor advised him to take an overland trip East. So he organized a wagon train to return to New York State. On the way back, he met the persecuted Mormons in Utah, and hostile Indians on the plains.

He recovered his health, and lived to carry on many useful enterprises and activities. Returning to California, with associates he organized the Bank of California in San Francisco, where he remained for a period of years. Later, returning to New York City, he became active in a variety of business enterprises. One interesting thing that he did was to establish the Mills Hotels in New York City, where self-respecting men could obtain inexpensive meals and lodging. He was very public-spirited, serving as trustee of the Museum of Natural History, the American Geographical Society, and as President of the New York Botanical Gardens.

Darius Ogden Mills was called "Lucky Ogden" by many people. His luck came to him through hard work, integrity, and fine character. He was grandfather of Ogden L. Mills, who was Secretary of the Treasury

## NORTH SALEM MEN OF ACHIEVEMENT

under President Hoover. He was also the father of Mrs. Whitelaw Reid.

When the North Salem Village Improvement Society was organized several years ago, Ogden L. Mills sent a generous contribution in memory of his grandfather. The old Mills home is now the property of Thomas L. Purdy, Jr., and is occupied by Mrs. Mollie Archer.

The famous journalist, Horace Greeley, lived in our Town for a time during his younger days. There was nothing in the simple home of the Greeley family to suggest that young Horace would become one of America's foremost journalists. On Titicus Road, now Route 116, their small house consisted only of a bedroom, sitting room, and kitchen. Twenty years ago, this little "Greeley House" was still standing. Today, only a few stones of the old foundation walls are to be seen.

In 1872, Horace Greeley ran unsuccessfully against General Grant for the presidency of the United States. On November 9 of that year, before the shouts of victory for Grant had died away, Horace Greeley was dead.

He never knew how greatly the people of the United States honored him. A large bronze statue stands in front of the New York Tribune building, and another at Greeley Square. However, the one in which we of the Central High School are most interested is by the railroad station in Chappaqua, where it may be seen from

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the train window. The high school in Chappaqua is named the Horace Greeley High School.

Mr. Greeley is well known for his famous remark, "Go West, young man, go West."

Many people still living in North Salem remember how much Mr. James Libby thought of North Salem and how greatly he enjoyed the days he spent here. His home was always the center of hospitality, with a long-remembered celebration held there upon the occasion of the laying of the Atlantic cable.

Mr. Libby was born in 1805 in the State of New Hampshire. He received his education in the schools of that State and later learned the hatter's trade, which in those days was a very profitable and important industry. Mr. Libby saw an opportunity to develop this trade in Canada, so he started a successful and prosperous business in Quebec.

In New York City, Mr. Libby was a pioneer in organizing and maintaining hotels on the "European plan." He also had an active part in establishing the first "horse railroad." Mr. Libby was President of the Sixth Avenue Line for two terms. The car of the "horse railroad" greatly resembled a stagecoach, which was used as a model. On one of these railroads, one horse could do the work that ten horses could do on a common road.

In politics Mr. Libby was a strong Democrat. He

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*Former President Ulysses S. Grant spent many happy hours here in his daughter-in-law's North Salem home*

served as Alderman for two years in New York City. Once he ran against Ferdinand Wood for Mayor of New York City but was defeated. Soon after this he retired to his estate in the Town of North Salem. In 1881 the property that belonged to Mr. Libby became the property of Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant, Jr. Since then it has been known as Merryweather or the Grant estate.

Fannie Chaffee, only child of Senator Jerome B. Chaffee of Colorado, while living at our national capital, met and fell in love with General Grant's second son, Ulysses S. Grant, Jr. They were married soon after, and as a wedding gift, Senator Chaffee gave them Merryweather, which he purchased in 1881.

The house which thus became the property of Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant, Jr., still stands in a triangle within a fork of the road south of Salem Center. Here one of our

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great generals and former Presidents, Ulysses S. Grant, spent many happy hours. General Grant himself never owned Merryweather, but he was often a guest of his son and daughter-in-law.

A beautiful Arabian horse came to North Salem through General Grant. After his presidency, he made a good-will tour around the world. Everywhere he went, he was welcomed with honor and given many fine gifts. One of these gifts was the Arabian horse which he sent to Merryweather farm. Afterward, the General became interested in breeding more of these Arabian horses. One of his most famous was the racehorse called Linden Tree.

A special friend of General Grant here in our Town was the late Charles Close, who used to tell of riding with the General in an elegant carriage, drawn by two Arabian horses. One day, one of these valuable horses slipped his halter and, being a high-spirited animal, ran wild, frightening many people in our quiet Town.

When the Civil War ended, Captain George Bement Butler, who had lost an arm while fighting with the Union Army in the Battle of Gettysburg, came to Croton Falls from Fordham, New York. He established his residence in the fine home known as the old Brown place, one of the oldest in our neighborhood. Located in our school district, in the section known as Butlerville, the Brown place is still occupied by the Butler family.

## NORTH SALEM MEN OF ACHIEVEMENT

Here Captain Butler brought up his family of five children. And here, despite his handicap, he continued his career. For Captain Butler was an artist of outstanding ability. He received his artistic education in Paris under prominent masters, and his portraits of his family and friends show his unusual ability. But the crowning honor of his career came when he was invited to go to the White House in Washington at the time Grover Cleveland was President. There he painted the portraits of Mrs. Cleveland and Ruth Cleveland. Among other portraits which Captain Butler painted were those of General Green and Ambassador Choate. He also did landscape painting, several examples of which have been reproduced in the Boston Copley prints.

One of his loveliest works hangs in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. It is entitled *The Girl in the Gray Shawl*. Captain Butler also won high honors at the Chicago Exposition in 1893. He died in 1904. He was the father of Mr. Thomas Butler, Croton Falls businessman.

Archaeologists are people who study history directly from ruins and relics of ancient civilizations. An archaeologist who became a leader in his field was brought up in Croton Falls. His name was Howard Crosby Butler and he was a son of Mr. and Mrs. Edward M. Butler, and a brother of Mr. Stewart B. Butler. He was born in

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

Croton Falls on March 7, 1872. When he was a young boy, he attended the Guinea one-room school.

Howard C. Butler was interested in history and began the study of architecture and archaeology when he entered Princeton University. He received his M.A. degree from Princeton in 1893. Spending much of his time in travel and writing, he was connected with Princeton University as a professor and archaeologist for the rest of his life. During this time, he wrote *Scotland's Ruined Abbeys*, *Ancient Athens*, and *Modern Athens*.

In 1899, Mr. Butler began a series of expeditions to the Syrian Desert, which is located in southwestern Asia, east of the Mediterranean Sea.

From 1910 to 1914 and again in 1922, Howard Butler conducted expeditions for the excavation of Sardis, one of the richest cities of Bible times. There he uncovered valuable relics such as marble columns, coins, ancient weapons, and tools. Many of these relics may now be seen in the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. During these expeditions, Mr. Butler contracted desert fever and died in Paris on August 13, 1922. He is buried in Ivandale Cemetery in Somers. His portrait hangs in Princeton University, where it was placed with special dedication ceremonies. In Henry Fairfield Osborn's book, *Impressions of Great Naturalists*, this eminent author pays tribute to him.

## *In Recognition*

WHEN, on August 7th, 1920, our Memorial Tablet to our North Salem veterans of World War I was unveiled on the grounds of our Town Hall, Mr. Albert J. Lobdell, who was then our Town Supervisor, made the following dedication. Since it so eloquently expresses what we feel, in this year of 1945, about those of our Town who have gone before us in all past years as well as in our country's share in the World Wars for freedom, we are giving it here.

"We erect our tablet in pride and in gratitude. But it may well be that we are yet too close to war, to realize completely how great a thing we have of which to be proud, how great a thing for which to be grateful.

"It was upon the most unselfish adventure in all history that these men of ours embarked. Those who look

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upon our tablet a century hence may more fully comprehend and appreciate these things than we can hope to do.

"This, at least, is crystal clear: Our pride and our gratitude we can express but partly in any tablet or memorial. To express it completely requires and will require all our unceasing efforts to see that the War of Liberation was not won in vain. It is only in cherishing, fostering and protecting the freedom and democracy for which these men toiled and suffered, sacrificed and died, that we shall erect a living memorial, more real and more lasting than any made of imperishable bronze."



*The Old Quit-Claim Deed  
of 1731*

*Three Historical Tours  
of North Salem*

*A Guide Post to North Salem's  
Historic Landmarks*

*The Old Quit-Claim Deed  
of 1731*

THIS INDENTURE made this 10th day of March  
in ye 4th year of ye Reign of Our Sovereign Lord  
George the Second, King of Great Brittain etc. Anno  
Domini 1731/2, Witnesseth, that Whereas We Thomas  
Hauley, Nathan St. John, Sam O. Smith, Benjamin Bene-  
dict, Richard Olmsted, Thomas Smith, Ebenezer Smith,  
Daniel Sherwood, Benjamin Burt, Thomas Hyatt, Ben-  
jamin Willson, Joseph Lee, Joseph Keeler, James Benedict,  
Richard Osburn, Sam A. Smith, Daniel Olmsted, Tim-  
othy Keeler, Matthew Seamore, Joseph Northrup and  
James Brown together with Adam Ireland, Benjamin  
Birdsell, and John Thomas, Having Joyntly obtained a  
pattent of Fifty thousand acres of ye oblong or equiva-  
lent lands, of His Excellency John Montgomery Esq. late  
Governor of New York, and having since obtained a

THE OLD QUIT-CLAIM DEED OF 1731

release of said Ireland, Birdsell and John Thomas, of the southern ten miles of said pattent and Others also whose names are not in said pattent or release, being intrusted therein by Obligation from us, and no division having been made of ye premises, Wherefore, We, Thomas Hauley, Nathan St. John, Sam O. Smith, Benjamin Benedict, Richard Olmsted, Thomas Smith, Ebenezer Smith, Daniel Sherwood, Benjamin Burt, Thomas Hyatt, Benjamin Willson, Joseph Lee, Joseph Keeler, James Benedict, Richard Osburn, Sam A. Smith, Daniel Olmsted, Timothy Keeler, Matthew Seamore, Joseph Northrup, and James Brown Do now proceed to make a division thereof, and do give, grant, Enfeoffs, aliene, Convey release and Confirm, and by these presents have given, granted, Enfeoff'd aliened, released, Conveyed and Confirmed, unto Jonah Keeler, his heirs and assigns forever, on Consideration of a Lease Obtained of said Jonah Keeler, and bearing Date herewith, the Following tract of land, viz; beginning att James Benedict's Norwest Corner, and runs South seventy seven degrees and an half west, an hundred and fifty rods, then South eight degrees west, three hundred and twenty five rods, then North seventy seven degrees and an half East, an hundred and eight rods then North fourteen degrees East, an hundred, sixty and Five rods, then Four degrees west, and hundred and fifty rods and is bounded South by undivided land,

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West by James Brown, North Joseph Keeler and Daniel Sherwood, East Thos. Smith and Ensign Benedict. The said Keeler being in Lawful possession thereof. To Have and to Hold, said granted and released premises, with all ye priveleges and appurtinences to ye same belonging, or in any wise appertaining as timber, trees, stones, Minerals, water courses, Springs, Herbage and all proffits and advantages that may arise or which may in any wise accrue therefrom. We ye above named Thos. Hauley, Nathan St. John, Samuel A. Smith, Benj. Benedict etc. and all ye aforementioned proprietors of said released ten miles, say we have released, made over, and granted ye above described tract of land, unto said Jonah Keeler, his heirs and assigns forever, to his and their sole and proper use and benefit, who shall and may forever hereafter by virtue hereof Enter upon possess and Enjoy ye same, convey, convert, alienate, and improve, in what way and manner, to what use and end soever, the said Keeler, his heirs and assigns shall see convenient. Yet reserving to ourselves, heirs and assigns ye usual allowance of Five acres to ye hundred, for highways and roads, which shall be laid out by a Committee chosen from time to time (As Ocasion requires) by ye Major part of ye proprietors of said released ten miles, ye Major part to be deemed by their intrests, which roads and highways shall be laid out in such place and manner, as said Committee shall see

THE OLD QUIT-CLAIM DEED OF 1731

necessary and most convenient, and We ye above named Thomas Hauley, Nathan St. John, Sam A. Smith etc. and the rest of ye proprietors above said do Joyntly and Severally covenant and agree for ourselves and heirs and assigns with ye said Jonah Keeler, his heirs and assigns that notwithstanding anything done, or wittingly suffered to be done by him; ye said Jonah Keeler, his heirs and assigns shall and may freely and clearly forever have, hold and enjoy ye above released premises without any manner of claim or incumbrance whatsoever, saving yet we do hereby oblige said Keeler, his heirs and assigns within ye space of three years from ye date hereof, effectually to cultivate three acres in every Fifty according to Pattentes and 'tis also to be understood, and by the true intent and meaning of both parties yet ye said Keeler, his heirs and assigns shall always pay ye yearly Quitrent at ye rate of two shillings and six pence of each hundred acres reserved payable by letters pattents to Our Lord ye King; at Lady day yearly, and this we insert as an abiding duty and obligation, always attending this release, and as a special condition thereof. Furthermore we, ye said Thomas Hauley, Nathan St. John, Sam O. Smith, Benjamin Benedict, Thomas Smith, Ebenezer Smith, Daniel Sherwood, Benjamin Burt, Thos. Hyatt, Benjamin Willson, Joseph Lee, Joseph Keeler, James Benedict, Richard Osburn, Sam A. Smith, Daniel Olm-

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

sted. Timothy Keeler, Matthew Seamore, Joseph Northrup, and James Brown and ye survivours and survivor of us, our heirs and assigns shall and will at any time hereafter upon ye reasonable request and at ye cost and charge in ye law, of ye said Jonah Keeler his heirs or assigns, make, do, acknowledge, execute and perform all such further and other reasonable act and acts, thing and things, assurances and conveyances in the law for ye more perfect definition, limiting conveying or asuring ye above released premises unto ye said Keeler, his heirs and assigns, (provided ye same do not contain further covenants, than are contained in these presents, or anything contrary to ye true intent, and meaning hereof) as by ye said Jonah Keeler, his heirs and assigns, Or his and their Council Learned in ye Law, shall be reasonably advised, devised, or required. In Witness Whereof, we do Hereunto set our names and seals, ye day and year above written.

*In presence of us Witnesses*

Recompense Thomas  
John Rockwell

*Memorandum this 20 day of March 1738 then appeared before me Recompense Thomas and under oath declared that he gave all the grantors signe this release and also gave John Rockwell signe with him as a witness. To the same and I have examined and find no material mistake and allowe the same to be recorded*

John Thomas      Ye Judge

*(Signed by the twenty-two men listed above.)*

# *Three Historical Tours of North Salem*

## **TOUR I**

*Starting Point: Route 22, site of the old plumbing works and first Juengst machine shop on east branch of the Croton River. Within the space of a minute or two you will be in two counties, Putnam and Westchester, and three towns, Southeast, North Salem, and Somers.*

*Proceed southward. Just before you cross the iron bridge into the Town of Somers, notice, at your left, evidence of the old millrace that provided water power for the hat and tool shops of Croton Falls many years ago. At your right, somewhat back from the road, stands the large building that was once the Croton Falls Grade School, now Masse Inn.*

*Continue on Route 100 past the crossroads. The road to the right leads to Lake Mahopac.*

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

*Along the river at this point* stood several private and public buildings of the early village of Croton Falls, previous to the acquisition of the land by the Department of Water Supply of New York City. *The next road to your right* leads to Butlerville, and the old Brown home erected in the 1700s, home of the late George Bement Butler, celebrated artist.

*On your right at 1.3 miles* is an ancient milestone which reads: "18 miles to Peekskill," reminder of the stagecoaches that passed this way over the Boston-Hudson River Turnpike. *At 1.5 miles*, the stately stone house is the former home of Gerard Crane of circus fame.

Soon you enter the village of Somers. *At 2.4 miles* you may view on your right the famous old Elephant Hotel, while *on your left* is the Old Bet monument. *Swing around the triangle, retrace your route to 2.8 miles, turn right on Route 116* for Purdys. *On your left on the turn at 3.0 miles* is the old Tompkins house, home of the descendants of Daniel D. Tompkins.

*As you cross the Harlem Railroad*, be reminded of the early village of Purdys that was originally located on the level lands near the station. The foundations of the New York Condensed Milk Plant can be seen on the bank of the Titicus River.

*Turn left and continue on Route 22. On your right,*

### THREE HISTORICAL TOURS

observe the remains of the old Purdy saw and grist mill. *At 4.4 miles on the corner* stands the original Isaac Hart Purdy homestead, and there by the roadside spreads Hangman's Oak of Revolutionary fame.

*On the hilltop at your left* stands Central High School, the first central rural school to be organized in New York State.

*At 5.1 miles*, a dirt road branches off *to the left* and crosses a large iron bridge over Croton River. This is Dean's Bridge Road and the site of the original Dean's Bridge.

*At the top of the hill* stood the Charles Wallace home and farther on *at 5.5* stood the William Purdy home, erected about 1770. *On your left* at this corner beside a small stream, notice the remains of an old grist mill.

*At the next corner* where the highway approaches the railroad (*5.7 miles*) stood the first Catholic Church of Croton Falls and vicinity.

*At 5.9 miles on the hill at your right* is the Croton Falls Grade School. Continue on through the village of Croton Falls, *passing at 6.3 miles* the site of the turntable when Croton Falls was the northern terminus of the Harlem Railroad a century ago.

The total distance of this tour is 6.8 miles.

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

### TOUR II

*Starting Point: Junction of Routes 22 and 116 near the Isaac Hart Purdy homestead. Proceed eastward on Route 116. On your right is Titicus Dam, erected 1890-95, forming Titicus Reservoir three miles long through the center of the town. The waters of this reservoir now cover some of the best farming land of this section, notable among which was the Decker dairy farm. The Wheeler Woolen Mill was located on the Titicus River about halfway up the valley.*

*At 1.3 miles on your left is Limestone Grotto, where limestone was once quarried and kiln-processed.*

*At 1.8 miles on your left, just over the stone wall, are the foundation walls of the old Greeley house.*

The Old Academy, now North Salem Town Hall, is readily distinguishable as you enter Salem Center, formerly DeLanceytown.

A side trip may be taken here by *turning right on a dirt road (3.3 miles)* to visit the Mills home just across Titicus River and then taking the Bogtown Road to Yerkes Corner and the old Indian Burial Ground.

*At 3.8 miles at Four Corners on your right is the famous Close home. Just across the road on your left, the remains of the Close Tavern.*

*Turn left and continue northward on Route 124. On*

### THREE HISTORICAL TOURS

*your left* is Salem Center Cemetery, the final resting place of many of the people mentioned in this book.

*At 4 miles on your left* is First Battery Farm, formerly the home of General John F. O'Ryan. *On your right* is the original June home.

*On the grounds of the present Parish estate at 4.8 miles* was the ancestral Lobdell homestead.

*At 5.5 miles*, turn left on Pequenakonck Road, passing *at 6.6 miles on your right* the large red brick Tompkins home, originally the Bailey house. *In the valley below* is Hollow House, the original Angevine home, now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Tibbets.

*At 9 miles, rejoin Route 22 and continue southward* to the starting point, passing points of interest as previously recorded in Tour I. The total distance of this tour is 10.2 miles.

### TOUR III

*Starting Point: Junction of Routes 116 and 124 near Salem Center. Proceed southward on Route 124. On your right* is the Close homestead; in the distance, *at your left*, the North Salem Grade School.

*Within the triangle formed by the junction of Routes 121 and 124* stands Merryweather, the Grant estate, formerly the Libby home.

*In the near-by field ahead and at your right* may be

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

seen the remains of the unfinished bridge of the proposed Goldens Bridge–Danbury trolley line.

*Turn left on Route 121. (The dirt road branching to the right leads to the present home of General John F. O’Ryan, the Sarah Bishop cave, and the André tablet.) Continue north on Route 121.*

*At 1.4 miles on your left is the original Benedict house, now the home of Mrs. Frank B. Kennard, near which ran the eastern boundary of Van Cortlandt Manor.*

*The embankment by the roadside at 1.5 miles carried the track bed for the above-mentioned trolley line. At this point notice a milestone, “55 miles to New York,” for you are now passing over the route of the old Vermont to New York Post Road.*

*Rejoin Route 116 at Howe’s Bridge and continue along the banks of the Titicus River.*

*At 2 miles is the section of North Salem locally known as the Hollow. Here during the early history of our Town were located several industrial establishments, including saw, grist, and paper mills, and an iron foundry.*

*At 2.2 miles is located the greatest natural curiosity of our town, the Great Boulder. The dirt road to the right leads to the Keeler homestead.*

*On the left corner just beyond at 2.3 miles is the Thaddeus Crane home and just across on the right corner is the Jesse Truesdale house.*

### THREE HISTORICAL TOURS

The section you are now traversing was included in the famous "Oblong" agreement.

*At 2.5 miles, notice the 56th Milestone.*

*At 2.7 miles on your left, the remains of the old Bailey Tavern, and on your right, the building with the arched entrance was one of the former Wallace homes.*

*Continue on Route 121 to 3.9 miles. Just ahead on the right is the old Quaker Meetinghouse, with Peach Lake in the distance.*

*Turn left on Bloomer Road, rejoining Route 124 at 5.3 miles. Proceed southward on Route 124, passing places of interest as previously recorded in Tour II.*

The total distance of this tour is 7.3 miles.

# *A Guide Post to North Salem's Historic Landmarks*

## OUR NORTH SALEM TOWN HALL

In the village of Salem Center, on Route 116 at the eastern end of the Titicus Reservoir. (*Pictures on pages iv and 111*)



## RUINS OF THE OLD GRIST MILL

Beside the Titicus River, near its junction with the Croton River. To be seen from Route 22, on the bridge just south of the Purdy Homestead, Purdys village. (*Picture on page 5*)



## THE GREAT BOULDER

In North Salem village between the Titicus River and Route 121. Any resident will direct you. (*Picture on page 17*)



## THE JOHN WALLACE TOMBSTONE

North Salem cemetery, Route 124. (*Picture on page 29*)

## A GUIDE POST TO NORTH SALEM

### OLD INDIAN BURIAL GROUND

In the woods near Bogtown. To find it requires a special guide, who can be secured through the Central High School.  
*(Picture on page 38)*



### TYPICAL OLD VEGETABLE CELLAR

On old Hardscrabble Road, now Pequenakonck, at the foot of Tompkins Hill. To be seen in the front garden of the A. B. Tibbets residence, formerly the home of Mr. Angevine. *(Picture on page 43)*



### THE PURDY HOMESTEAD

In Purdys village, at the junction of Routes 116 and 22.  
*(Picture on page 49)*



### JOHN YERKES' OLD TAVERN

In Bogtown, south of the Titicus River. Foundation walls only remain. A guide may be secured at Central High School.  
*(Picture on page 56)*



### THE THADDEUS CRANE HOMESTEAD

In North Salem village where Baxter Road joins Route 121.  
*(Picture on page 59)*



### THE SITE OF OLD DEAN'S BRIDGE

West of Route 22, halfway between Purdys and Croton Falls, the present bridge is on this site. *(Picture on page 60)*

WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

MAJOR ANDRÉ TABLET

On the Gilbert Estate in Lewisboro. (*Picture on page 64*)



THE ENOCH CROSBY MONUMENT

In Gilead Cemetery, Carmel. Go to Carmel, up the hill past Drew Seminary. Take first turn to the left. (*Picture on page 68*)



HANGMAN'S OAK

On Route 22, just south of Central High School and near the Purdy Homestead. (*Picture on page 71*)



THE OLD QUAKER MEETING HOUSE

On a knoll overlooking Peach Lake, just east of Route 121. (*Picture on page 81*)



RUINS OF THE BRIDGE OF THE ABANDONED  
NORTH SALEM-DANBURY TROLLEY LINE

Near Grant's Corner, just west of Route 121. (*Picture on page 96*)



THE OLD CROTON FALLS FACTORY

Just west of Croton Falls village and east of the Croton River. (*Picture on page 103*)

## A GUIDE POST TO NORTH SALEM

### SITE OF THE OLD PLUMBING WORKS AND THE FIRST JUENGST SHOP

On Route 22, by the Croton River falls, near Croton Falls village. (*Picture on page 107*)



### THE JUNE RESIDENCE

On Route 124, not far from the four corners (Close's Corner) where Route 124 crosses Route 116. (*Picture on page 123*)



### THE CLOSE HOMESTEAD

About halfway between the villages of North Salem and Salem Center, at the four corners (Close's Corner) where Route 124 crosses Route 116. (*Picture on page 127*)



### THE STATUE OF OLD BET

In the center of the village of Somers, where Route 118 joins Route 116. (*Picture on page 131*)



### THE ELEPHANT HOTEL

In the center of the village of Somers, where Route 118 joins 116. Now Somers Town Hall. (*Picture on page 132*)



### THE SARAH BISHOP CAVE

On West Mountain in the southeast corner of our Town on the estate of Jonathan Bulkley, entrance between Ridge-

## WHEN OUR TOWN WAS YOUNG

field and South Salem. Special permission should be obtained from the owner. (*Picture on page 135*)



## THE MILLS HOMESTEAD

Just south of the North Salem Town Hall, on Turkey Hill Road at the beginning of Mills Road. (*Picture on page 143*)



## MERRYWEATHER, THE GRANT ESTATE

Within the triangle formed by the juncture of Routes 121 and 124, a short distance south of Close's Corner (where Route 124 crosses Route 116). (*Picture on page 147*)



## OLD SCHOOLS STILL TO BE SEEN

The old North Salem Academy (pages iv and 111) is now our Town Hall, Salem Center village. The old school in Purdys village (page 117) is now a residence there. The old Guinea School (page 112), now a residence on the King property, is outside Croton Falls on Pequenakonck Road. The old school in Salem Center (page 117) is now a residence on Route 116. The old Pine Tree school (page 117) is now a residence on Star Ridge Road. The fine residence of Louis Ettlinger, a later Croton Falls school (page 117), is now Masse Inn on Route 118, by the Croton River.



## THE FARM AND CRAFT COLLECTION

The typical old ironware and implements (pages 24, 46, 54) are on exhibition in the Farm and Craft Collection of the New York Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York.



**TOWN**  
**NORTH**  
Westchester

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## YESTERDAY'S MAP OF OUR TOWN





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